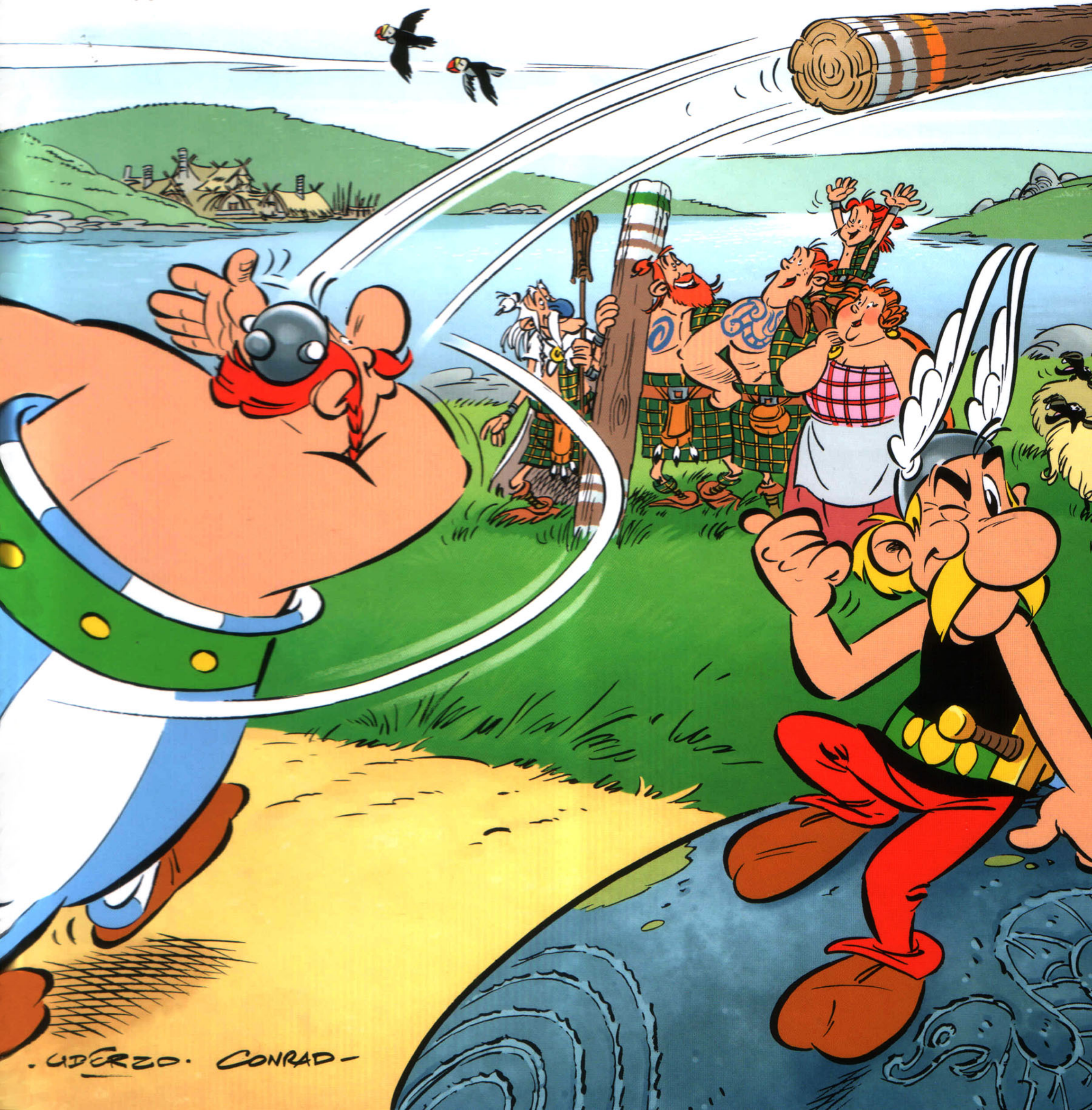
R. GOSCINNY **Asterix** A. UDERZO

Asterix and the Picts

Written by Jean-Yves FERRI

Illustrated by Didier CONRAD



GOSCINNY AND UDERZO

PRESENT

An Asterix Adventure

ASTERIX AND THE PICTS

Written by JEAN-YVES FERRI

Illustrated by DIDIER CONRAD

Translated by ANTHEA BELL



Colour by THIERRY MÉBARKI, MURIELLE LEROI, RAPHAËL DELERUE

Congratulations to Jean-Yves Ferri and Didier Conrad for having the courage and talent to write and draw this new Asterix album. Thanks to them, the Gaulish village created with my friend René Goscinny can go on having new adventures to delight readers of the series.

Albert Uderzo

The memory of René Goscinny is never far away when Asterix is being brought to life. Until the present, the huge talent of Albert Uderzo has worked to preserve it. Today, now that Albert has watched over the production of the first album on which the original creators did not work, I like to think that my father would be proud of the authors to whom we have entrusted the famous little Gaul – as proud and happy as I am.

Anne Goscinny

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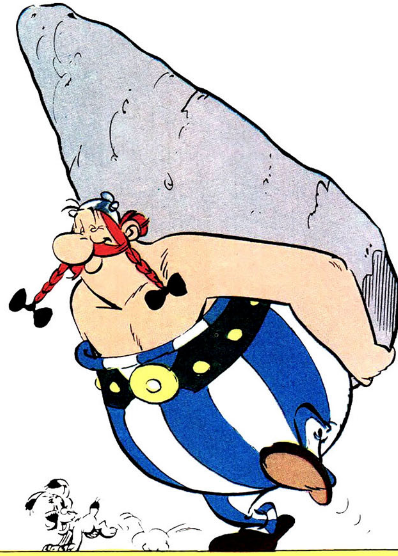
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a few of the Gauls



Asterix, the hero of these adventures. A shrewd, cunning little warrior; all perilous missions are immediately entrusted to him. Asterix gets his superhuman strength from the magic potion brewed by the druid Getafix . . .



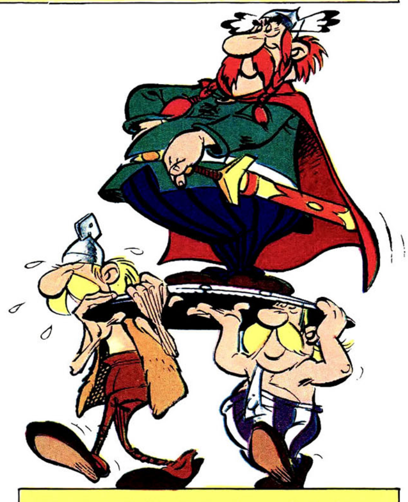
Obelix, Asterix's inseparable friend. A menhir delivery-man by trade; addicted to wild boar. Obelix is always ready to drop everything and go off on a new adventure with Asterix – so long as there's wild boar to eat, and plenty of fighting. His constant companion is Dogmatix, the only known canine ecologist, who howls with despair when a tree is cut down.



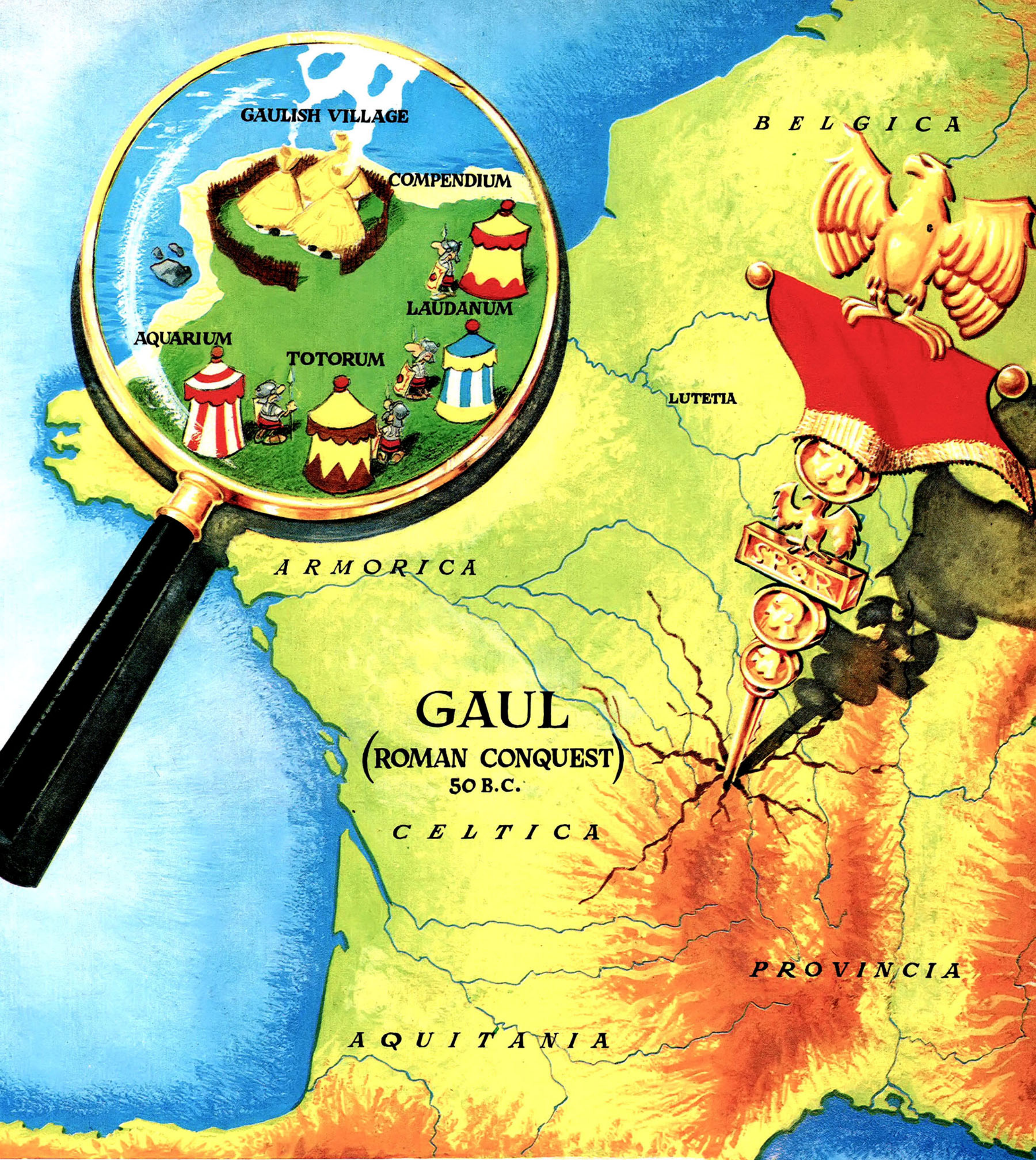
Getafix, the venerable village druid. Gathers mistletoe and brews magic potions. His speciality is the potion which gives the drinker superhuman strength. But Getafix also has other recipes up his sleeve . . .



Cacofonix, the bard. Opinion is divided as to his musical gifts. Cacofonix thinks he's a genius. Everyone else thinks he's unspeakable. But so long as he doesn't speak, let alone sing, everybody likes him . . .



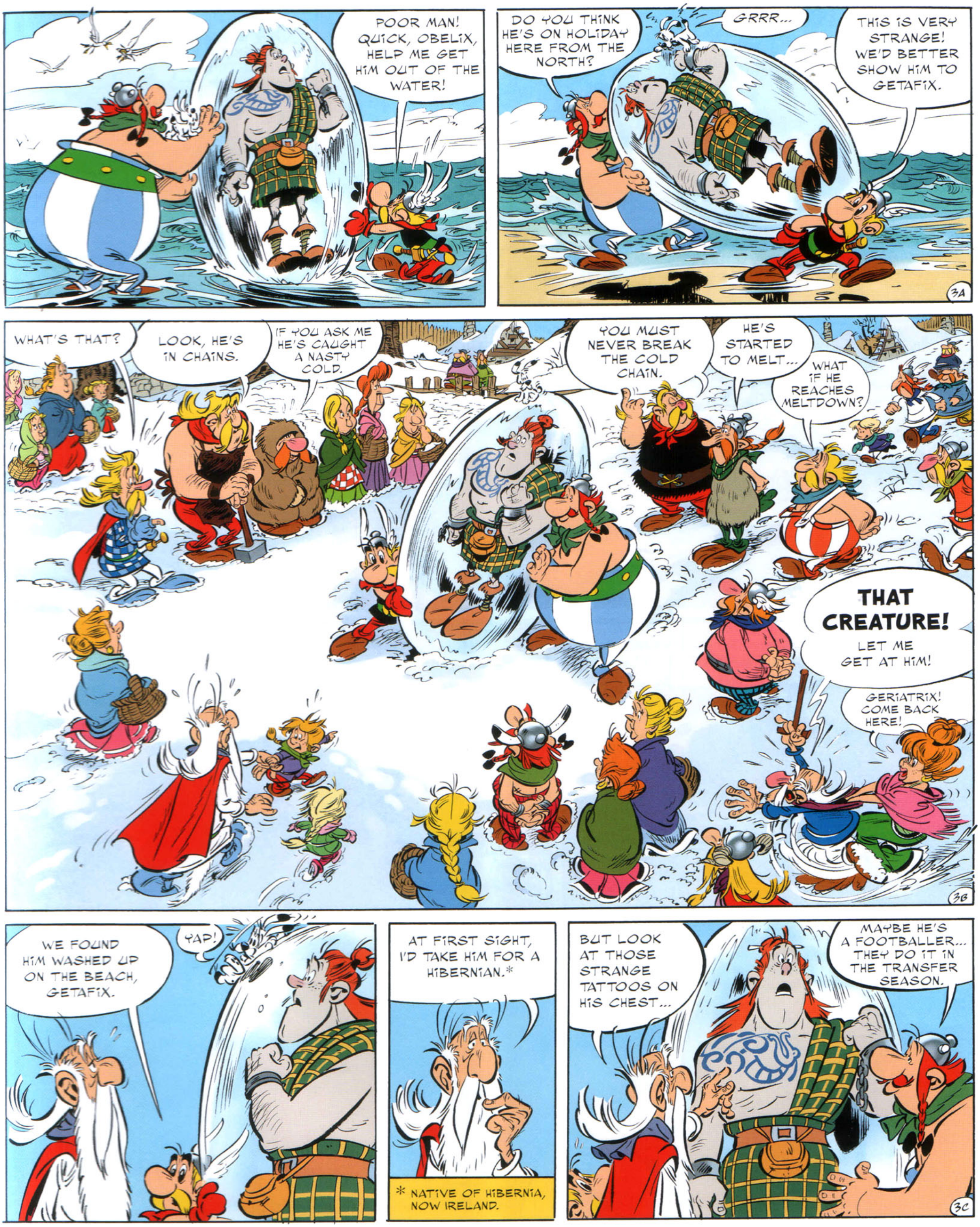
Finally, Vitalstatistix, the chief of the tribe. Majestic, brave and hot-tempered, the old warrior is respected by his men and feared by his enemies. Vitalstatistix himself has only one fear; he is afraid the sky may fall on his head tomorrow. But as he always says, 'Tomorrow never comes.'



The year is 50 BC. Gaul is entirely occupied by the Romans. Well, not entirely . . . One small village of indomitable Gauls still holds out against the invaders. And life is not easy for the Roman legionaries who garrison the fortified camps of Totorum, Aquarium, Laudanum and Compendium . . .


OCCASIONALLY THE PLEASANT CLIMATE OF ARMORICA GAVE WAY TO THE STORMY WEATHER OF A HARD WINTER... IT SO HAPPENS THAT THIS MORNING, AFTER SEVERAL COLD DAYS, A PALE SUN COMES OUT AT LAST TO WARM THE LITTLE VILLAGE THAT WE KNOW SO WELL...
FRESH FISH! BUY MY NICE FRESH FISH!
FISH UNHYGIENIX SEAFOOD
?
HUH! FRESH, IS IT? TELL US ANOTHER!
HI, GERIATRIX! STILL A BIT NIPPY, EH?
OI! HERE'S CAESAR'S HEAD!
THAT WAS NOTHING TO SPEAK OF! I'VE SEEN WORSE!
IN THE YEAR 50 BV (BEFORE VITALSTATISTIX), IT WAS SO COLD THAT THE SEA FROZE OVER! SEAGULLS CRASH-LANDED ON THE WAVES!
?
GERIATRIX, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT IN THIS WEATHER? YOU KNOW YOU'LL CATCH YOUR DEATH!
...FROZEN SEA MONSTERS CAME UP FROM THE SEA!
WE PUSHED THEM BACK WITH STALACTITES.
POOR OLD GERIATRIX! HE'S ALWAYS BEEN INCLINED TO RAMBLE ON.
1B


ASTERIX, DO YOU REALLY THINK THERE'S TOO MUCH SNOW TO GO HUNTING WILD BOAR?
YES, OBELIX. BUT WE CAN ALWAYS LOOK FOR OYSTERS.
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S FEBRUARY.
AND FEBRUARY IS A MONTH WITH AN "R" IN IT!
FEBRUARY EVEN HAS TWO "R"S IN IT.
SO THE WORLD'S OUR OYSTER!
I LOVE WALKING ON THE BEACH AFTER A STORM, FINDING ALL THE THINGS CAST UP BY THE SEA.
LOOK AT THAT, ASTERIX!
2A
A DENTED OLD HELMET, JUST THE THING FOR MY COLLECTION!
AND AN OLD AMPHORA!
GREEK OR PHOENICIAN, I'M NOT SURE WHICH...
AND A BLOCK OF ICE, ASTERIX. CAN IT REALLY BE A BLOCK OF ICE?
GRR
OF COURSE, OBELIX. REMEMBER WHAT GERIATRIX SAID!
GRR
YES... BUT A BLOCK OF ICE WITH SOMEONE INSIDE IT LOOKING OUT AT ME?
WOOF! WOOF!
!
2B



POOR MAN! QUICK, OBELIX, HELP ME GET HIM OUT OF THE WATER!
DO YOU THINK HE'S ON HOLIDAY HERE FROM THE NORTH?
GRRR...
THIS IS VERY STRANGE! WE'D BETTER SHOW HIM TO GETAFIX.
3A
WHAT'S THAT?
LOOK, HE'S IN CHAINS.
IF YOU ASK ME HE'S CAUGHT A NASTY COLD.
YOU MUST NEVER BREAK THE COLD CHAIN.
HE'S STARTED TO MELT...
WHAT IF HE REACHES MELTDOWN?
THAT CREATURE! LET ME GET AT HIM!
GERIATRIX! COME BACK HERE!
3B
WE FOUND HIM WASHED UP ON THE BEACH, GETAFIX.
YAP!
AT FIRST SIGHT, I'D TAKE HIM FOR A HIBERNIAN.*
* NATIVE OF HIBERNIA, NOW IRELAND.
BUT LOOK AT THOSE STRANGE TATTOOS ON HIS CHEST...
MAYBE HE'S A FOOTBALLER... THEY DO IT IN THE TRANSFER SEASON.
3C

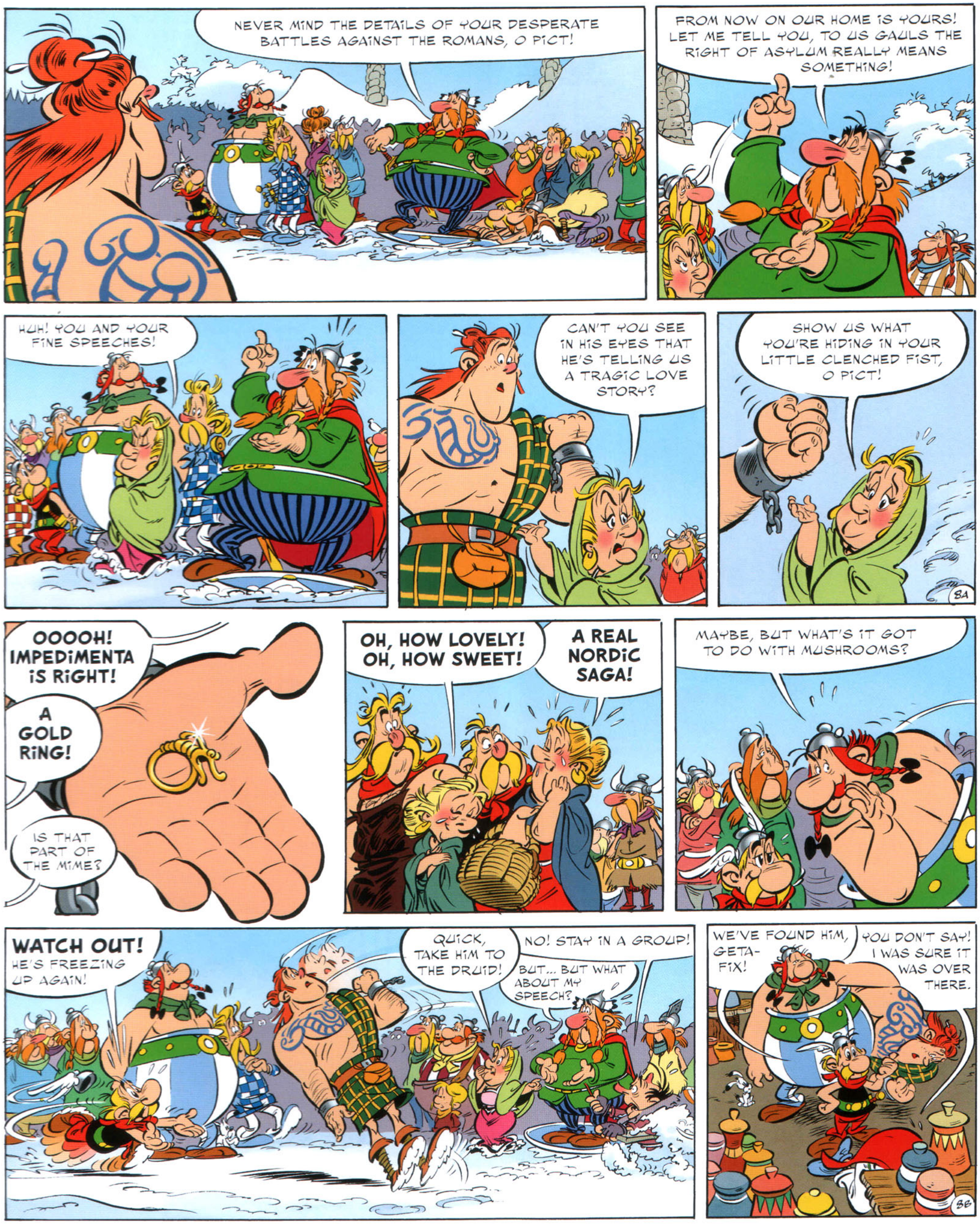


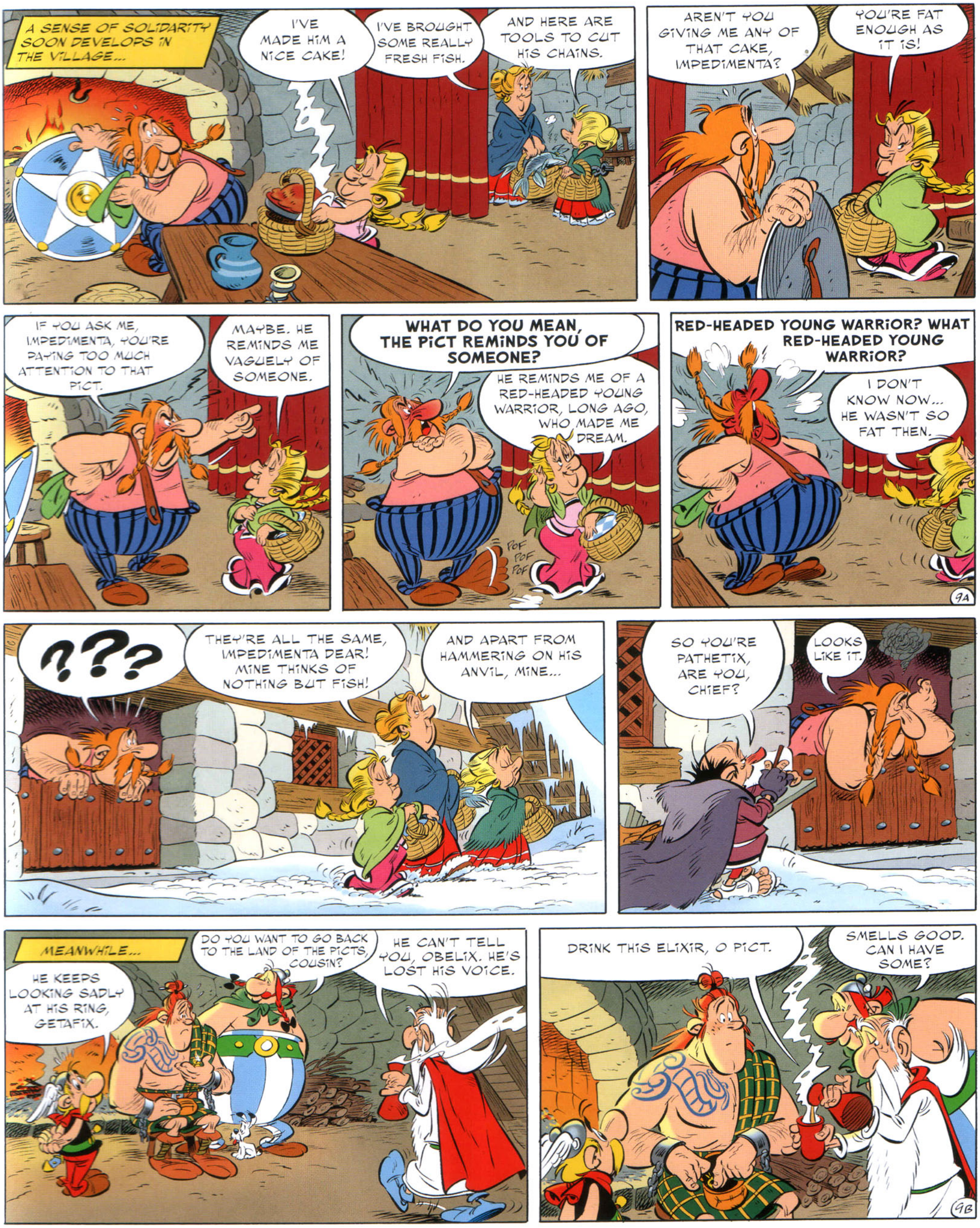
NO, OBELIX, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, WE HAVE HERE A PICT FROM DISTANT CALEDONIA!*
A WHAT?
A PICT!
* SCOTLAND
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, BOYS! WHEN YOU'VE PICKED UP THE PICT TAKE HIM TO GETAFIX'S HUT.
YES, QUIIIICK!
HE'S SLIIIPP-ERY...
WHO IS?
THIS PICT!
WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM, O DRUID?
WHO KNOWS, VITALSTATISTIX?
LIKE US, OUR CALEDONIAN COUSINS ARE FIERCE WARRIORS WHO HAVE ALWAYS RESISTED THE ROMAN INVADERS AND...
AHEM! AHEM!
4A
SO SORRY TO INVADE YOU LIKE THIS.
LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF: LIMITEDNUMBUS, HERE TO TAKE A CENSUS.
MY COLLEAGUES AND I ARE TRAVELLING THE MOST REMOTE PROVINCES TO COUNT THE POPULATION AND DRAW UP A LIST OF THEIR ACTIVITIES.
ER... IS THERE A PROBLEM? AM I INTERRUPTING A TRADITIONAL CEREMONY?
4B


BUT DON'T WORRY! THIS IS A PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY. ITS SOLE AIM IS TO SLIM DOWN THE FAT CATS AMONG THE LOCAL...
I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S A FAT CAT!
STOP IT, OBELIX! THIS LITTLE CLERK IS ONLY OBEYING ORDERS.
I CAN CONFIiiiRM THAT!
ANYWAY, I'M FAMOUS FOR MY LACK OF INITIATIVE!
RIGHT, YOU CAN TAKE YOUR CENSUS, ROMAN, BUT GET ON WITH IT QUICKLY AND BE DISCREET.
YOUR (GULP) REQUEST HAS BEEN RECORDED.
NOW, EVERYONE OUT, AND LET'S LEAVE OUR DRUID TO WATCH OVER THE CASTAWAY.
5A
NO, NO! I'M GOING HOME ON FOOT. TOO MUCH BLACK ICE ABOUT!
ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T RATHER STAY IN A GROUP TO HAVE THE CENSUS TAKEN?
YOU JUST WAIT, THEY'LL COME IN THEIR THOUSANDS, ALL IN BLOCKS OF ICE!
CALM DOWN, GERIATRIX POPPET!
POOR BOY! SO YOUNG! I DO HOPE HE GETS OVER IT!
AND SO ELEGANT! DID YOU SEE THOSE TRENDY TATTOOS?
AND THAT EXOTIC LITTLE KILT!
I MUST SAY, IT'S A CHANGE FROM OUR OAFISH GAULISH MENFOLK WITH THEIR BIG CONKS!
TEEHEEHEE! YOU'RE RIGHT, BACTERIA.
PFFR!
5B

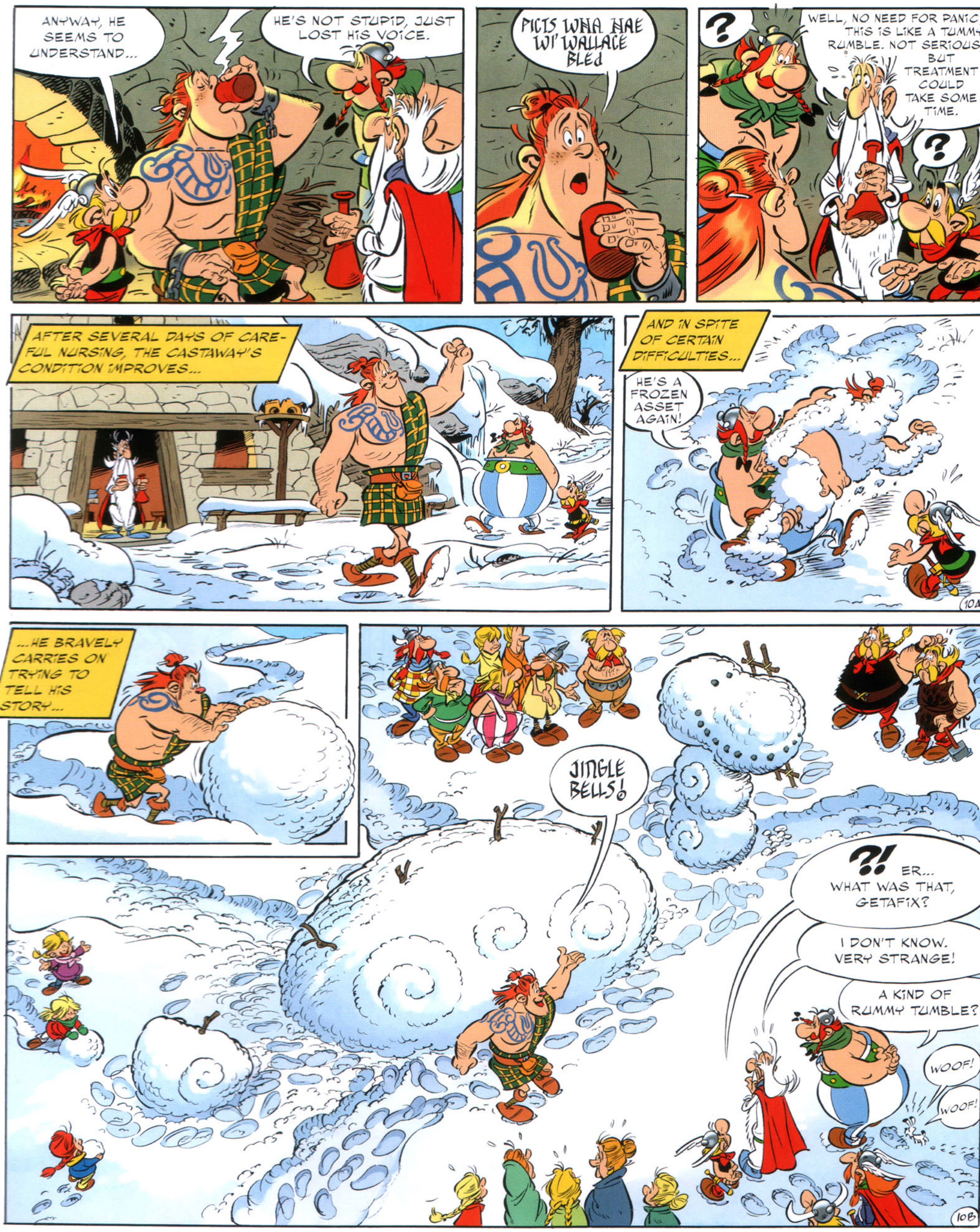

SEVERAL HOURS LATER.
AND NOW TO STIMULATE THE PULSE GENTLY.
HAWTHORN LEAF, MISTLETOE LEAVES, CAMOMILE OIL...
TINK!
HE MUSTN'T COME ROUND TOO SUDDENLY.
NOW WHAT DID I DO WITH MY POT OF CAMOMILE OIL?
THAT'LL TEACH ME TO LABEL MY POTS!
...XIV, XV.
HEY! JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE. IT'S FOR THE CENSUS.
SURNAME, FIRST NAME, PROFESSION. PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY RESIDENT?
CRK.
HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?
CRK

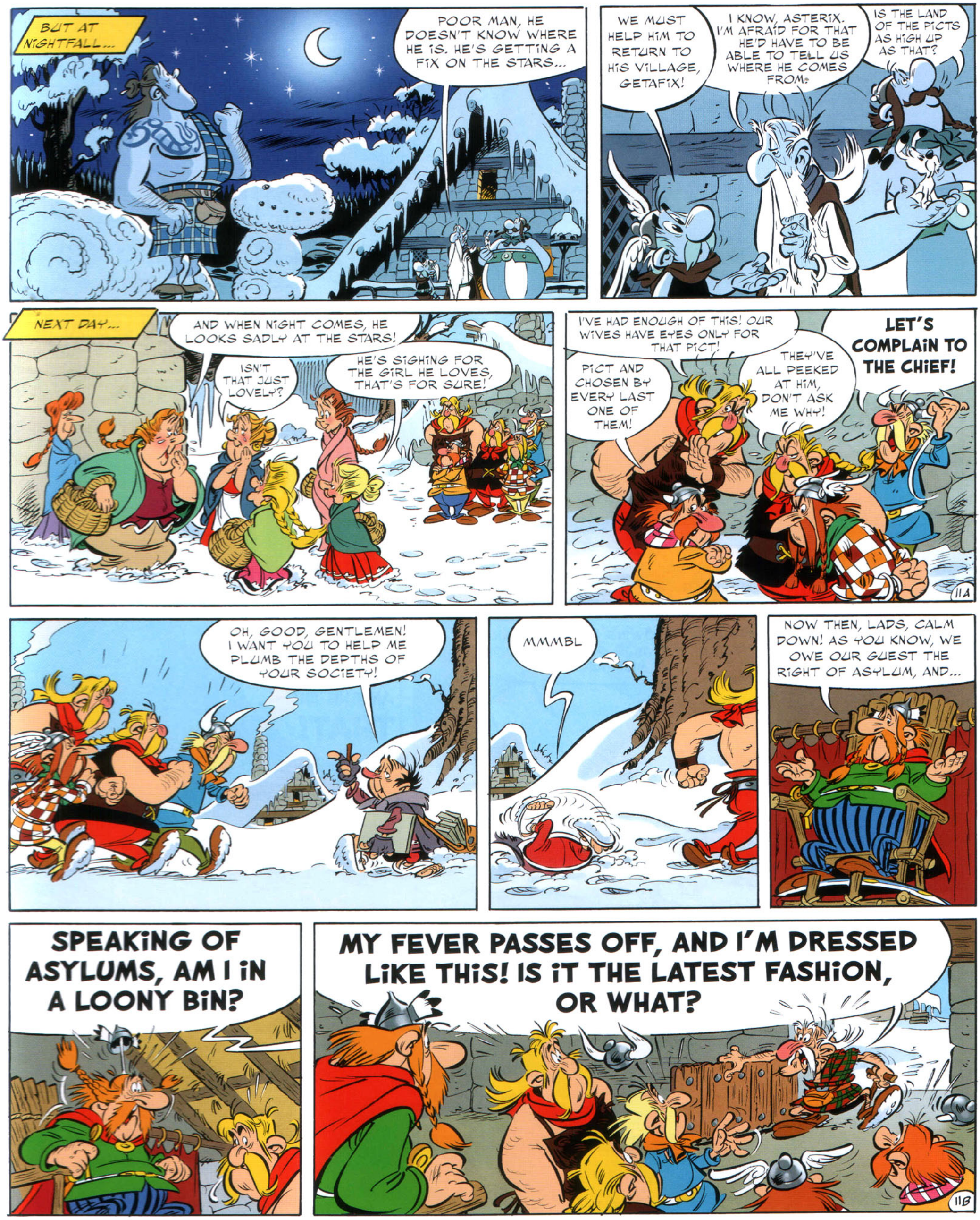

COME QUICK! THE PICT HAS ESCAPED!
PICKING UP THE TRAIL OF A PICT IS A PICKY BUSINESS, RIGHT, ASTERIX?
AT LEAST IT PROVES THAT HE'S FEELING BETTER.
I CAN CONFIRM THAT!
SSH! HE'S TELLING HIS STORY.
FOUR!
STORMS?
WHIRLWINDS?
MUSHROOMS?
FAR AWAY!
SOME-WHERE ELSE!
NEAR COMPENDIUM!
VICTORY!
REJOICING!
STERNUM!
ER...
LET'S SEE...
WE'LL GO OVER IT AGAIN...
I GET IT! A TERRIBLE STORY! HE WAS EATING MUSHROOMS AT FOUR ON THE DOT WHEN A WHIRLWIND HIT HIM RIGHT IN THE STOMACH.

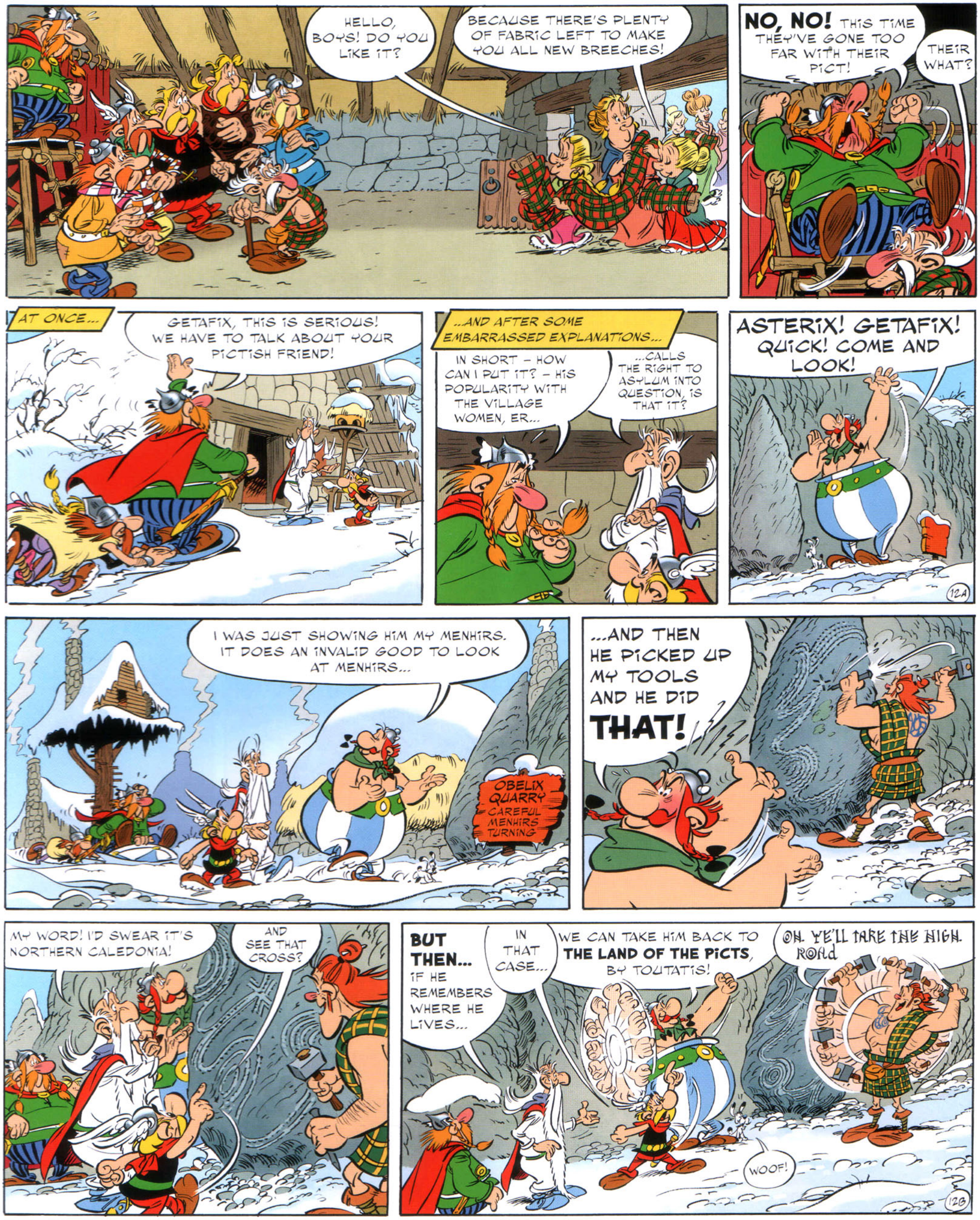

NEVER MIND THE DETAILS OF YOUR DESPERATE BATTLES AGAINST THE ROMANS, O PICT!
FROM NOW ON OUR HOME IS YOURS! LET ME TELL YOU, TO US GAULS THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM REALLY MEANS SOMETHING!
HUH! YOU AND YOUR FINE SPEECHES!
CAN'T YOU SEE IN HIS EYES THAT HE'S TELLING US A TRAGIC LOVE STORY?
SHOW US WHAT YOU'RE HIDING IN YOUR LITTLE CLENCHED FIST, O PICT!
OOOOH! IMPEDIMENTA IS RIGHT!
A GOLD RING!
IS THAT PART OF THE MIME?
OH, HOW LOVELY! OH, HOW SWEET!
A REAL NORDIC SAGA!
MAYBE, BUT WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH MUSHROOMS?
WATCH OUT! HE'S FREEZING UP AGAIN!
QUICK, TAKE HIM TO THE DRUID!
NO! STAY IN A GROUP!
BUT... BUT WHAT ABOUT MY SPEECH?
WE'VE FOUND HIM, GETAFIX!
YOU DON'T SAY! I WAS SURE IT WAS OVER THERE.

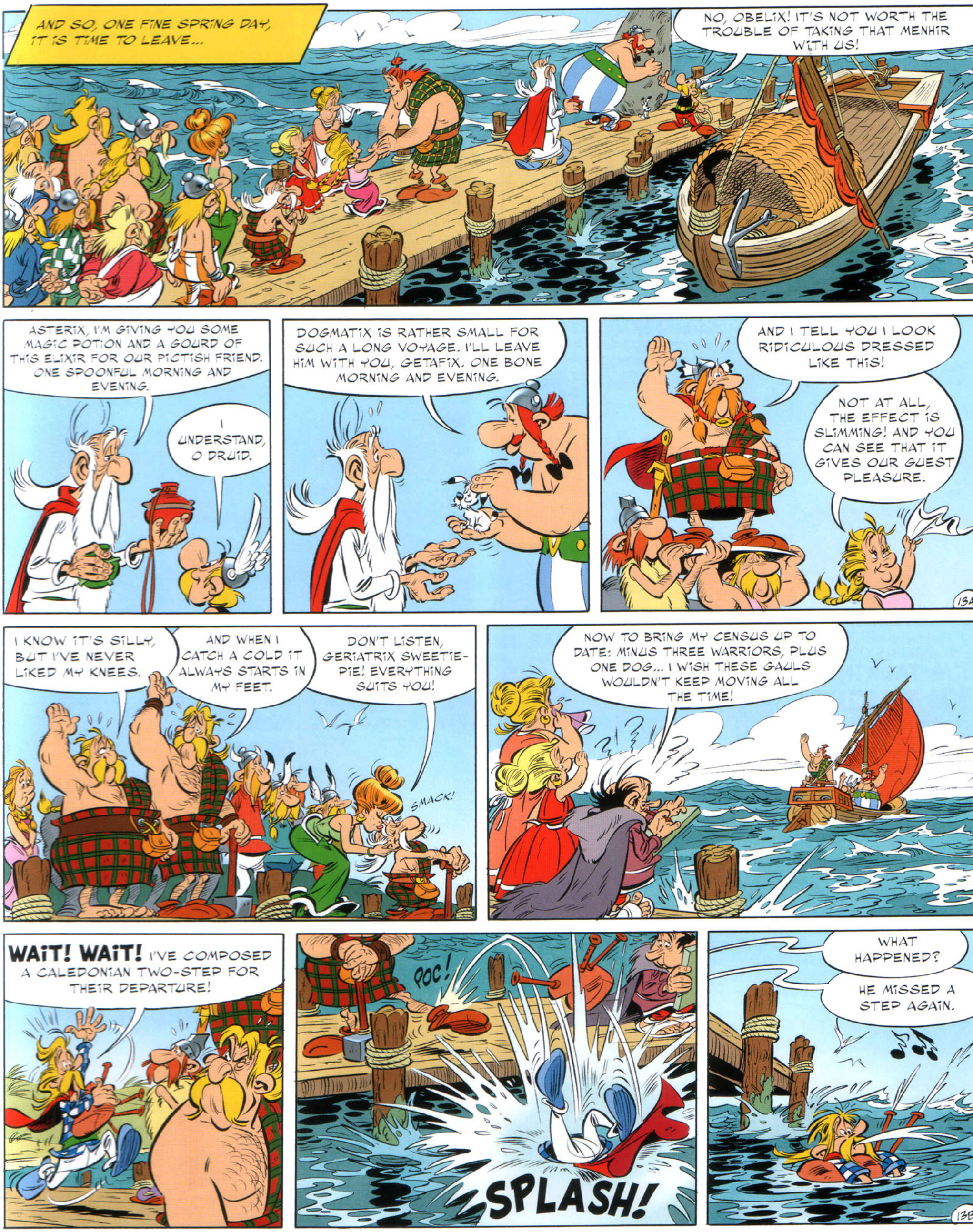


A SENSE OF SOLIDARITY SOON DEVELOPS IN THE VILLAGE...
I'VE MADE HIM A NICE CAKE!
I'VE BROUGHT SOME REALLY FRESH FISH.
AND HERE ARE TOOLS TO CUT HIS CHAINS.
AREN'T YOU GIVING ME ANY OF THAT CAKE, IMPEDIMENTA?
YOU'RE FAT ENOUGH AS IT IS!
IF YOU ASK ME, IMPEDIMENTA, YOU'RE PAYING TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THAT PICT.
MAYBE. HE REMINDS ME VAGUELY OF SOMEONE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE PICT REMINDS YOU OF SOMEONE?
HE REMINDS ME OF A RED-HEADED YOUNG WARRIOR, LONG AGO, WHO MADE ME DREAM.
POF POF POF
RED-HEADED YOUNG WARRIOR? WHAT RED-HEADED YOUNG WARRIOR?
I DON'T KNOW NOW... HE WASN'T SO FAT THEN.
9A
???
THEY'RE ALL THE SAME, IMPEDIMENTA DEAR! MINE THINKS OF NOTHING BUT FISH!
AND APART FROM HAMMERING ON HIS ANVIL, MINE...
SO YOU'RE PATHETIX, ARE YOU, CHIEF?
LOOKS LIKE IT.
MEANWHILE...
HE KEEPS LOOKING SADLY AT HIS RING, GETAFIX.
DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO THE LAND OF THE PICTS, COUSIN?
HE CAN'T TELL YOU, OBELIX. HE'S LOST HIS VOICE.
DRINK THIS ELIXIR, O PICT.
SMELLS GOOD. CAN I HAVE SOME?
9B

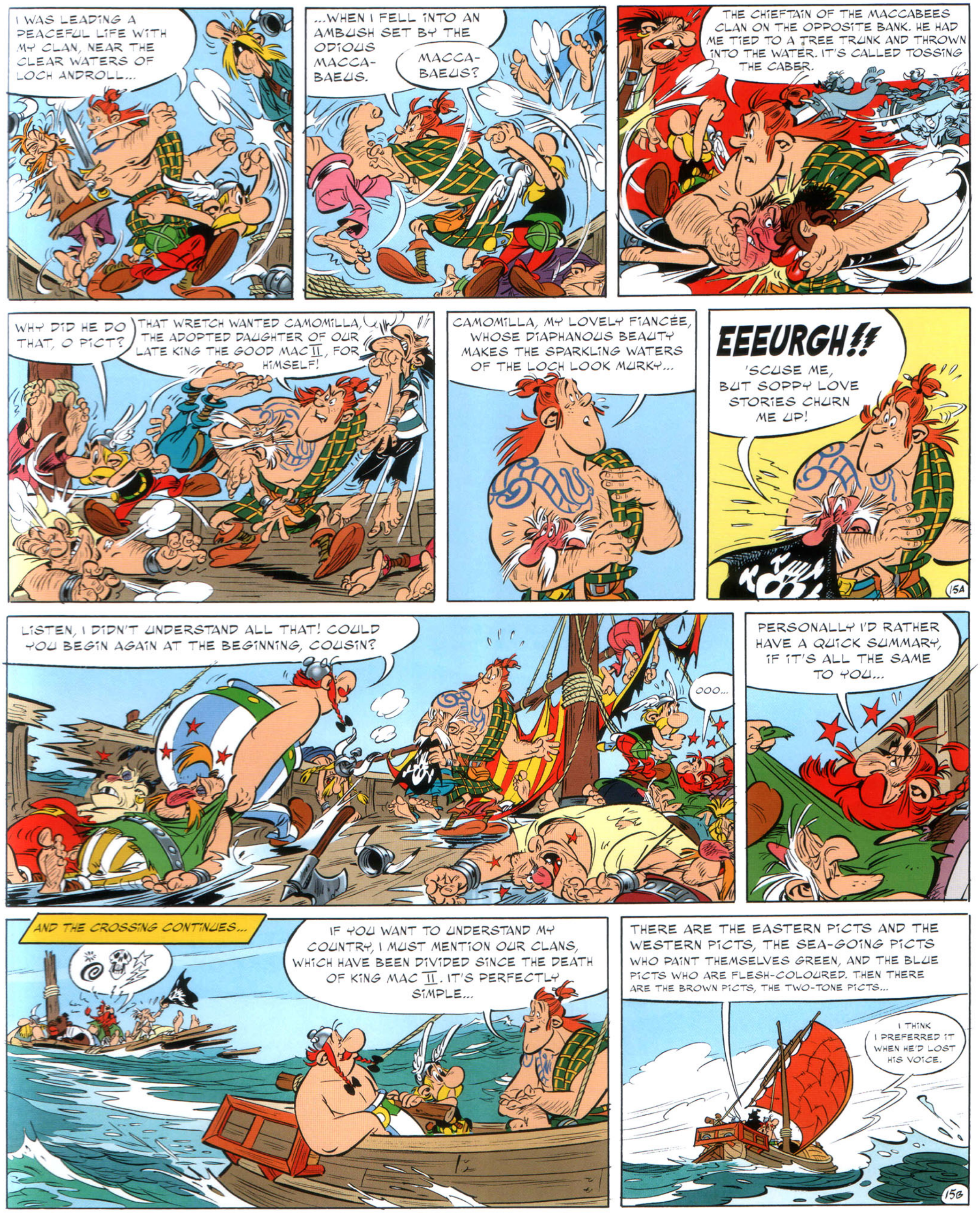

ANYWAY, HE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND...
HE'S NOT STUPID, JUST LOST HIS VOICE.
PICTS WHA HAE WI' WALLACE BLED
?
WELL, NO NEED FOR PANIC; THIS IS LIKE A TUMMY RUMBLE. NOT SERIOUS, BUT TREATMENT COULD TAKE SOME TIME.
?
AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF CAREFUL NURSING, THE CASTAWAY'S CONDITION IMPROVES...
AND IN SPITE OF CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES...
HE'S A FROZEN ASSET AGAIN!
10A
...HE BRAVELY CARRIES ON TRYING TO TELL HIS STORY...
JINGLE BELLS!
?! ER... WHAT WAS THAT, GETAFIX?
I DON'T KNOW. VERY STRANGE!
A KIND OF RUMMY TUMBLE?
WOOF!
WOOF!
10B


BUT AT NIGHTFALL...
POOR MAN, HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE IS. HE'S GETTING A FIX ON THE STARS...
WE MUST HELP HIM TO RETURN TO HIS VILLAGE, GETAFIX!
I KNOW, ASTERIX. I'M AFRAID FOR THAT HE'D HAVE TO BE ABLE TO TELL US WHERE HE COMES FROM.
IS THE LAND OF THE PICTS AS HIGH UP AS THAT?
NEXT DAY...
AND WHEN NIGHT COMES, HE LOOKS SADLY AT THE STARS!
ISN'T THAT JUST LOVELY?
HE'S SIGHING FOR THE GIRL HE LOVES, THAT'S FOR SURE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS! OUR WIVES HAVE EYES ONLY FOR THAT PICT!
PICT AND CHOSEN BY EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!
THEY'VE ALL PEEKED AT HIM, DON'T ASK ME WHY!
LET'S COMPLAIN TO THE CHIEF!
11A
OH, GOOD, GENTLEMEN! I WANT YOU TO HELP ME PLUMB THE DEPTHS OF YOUR SOCIETY!
MMMBL
NOW THEN, LADS, CALM DOWN! AS YOU KNOW, WE OWE OUR GUEST THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM, AND...
SPEAKING OF ASYLUMS, AM I IN A LOONY BIN?
MY FEVER PASSES OFF, AND I'M DRESSED LIKE THIS! IS IT THE LATEST FASHION, OR WHAT?
11B


HELLO, BOYS! DO YOU LIKE IT?
BECAUSE THERE'S PLENTY OF FABRIC LEFT TO MAKE YOU ALL NEW BREECHES!
NO, NO! THIS TIME THEY'VE GONE TOO FAR WITH THEIR PICT!
THEIR WHAT?
AT ONCE...
GETAFIX, THIS IS SERIOUS! WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR PICTISH FRIEND!
...AND AFTER SOME EMBARRASSED EXPLANATIONS...
IN SHORT – HOW CAN I PUT IT? – HIS POPULARITY WITH THE VILLAGE WOMEN, ER...
...CALLS THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM INTO QUESTION, IS THAT IT?
ASTERIX! GETAFIX! QUICK! COME AND LOOK!
12A
I WAS JUST SHOWING HIM MY MENHIRS. IT DOES AN INVALID GOOD TO LOOK AT MENHIRS...
OBELIX QUARRY
CAREFUL MENHIRS TURNING
...AND THEN HE PICKED UP MY TOOLS AND HE DID THAT!
MY WORD! I'D SWEAR IT'S NORTHERN CALEDONIA!
AND SEE THAT CROSS?
BUT THEN... IF HE REMEMBERS WHERE HE LIVES...
IN THAT CASE...
WE CAN TAKE HIM BACK TO THE LAND OF THE PICTS, BY TOUTATIS!
OH, YE'LL TAKE THE HIGH ROAD
WOOF!
12B

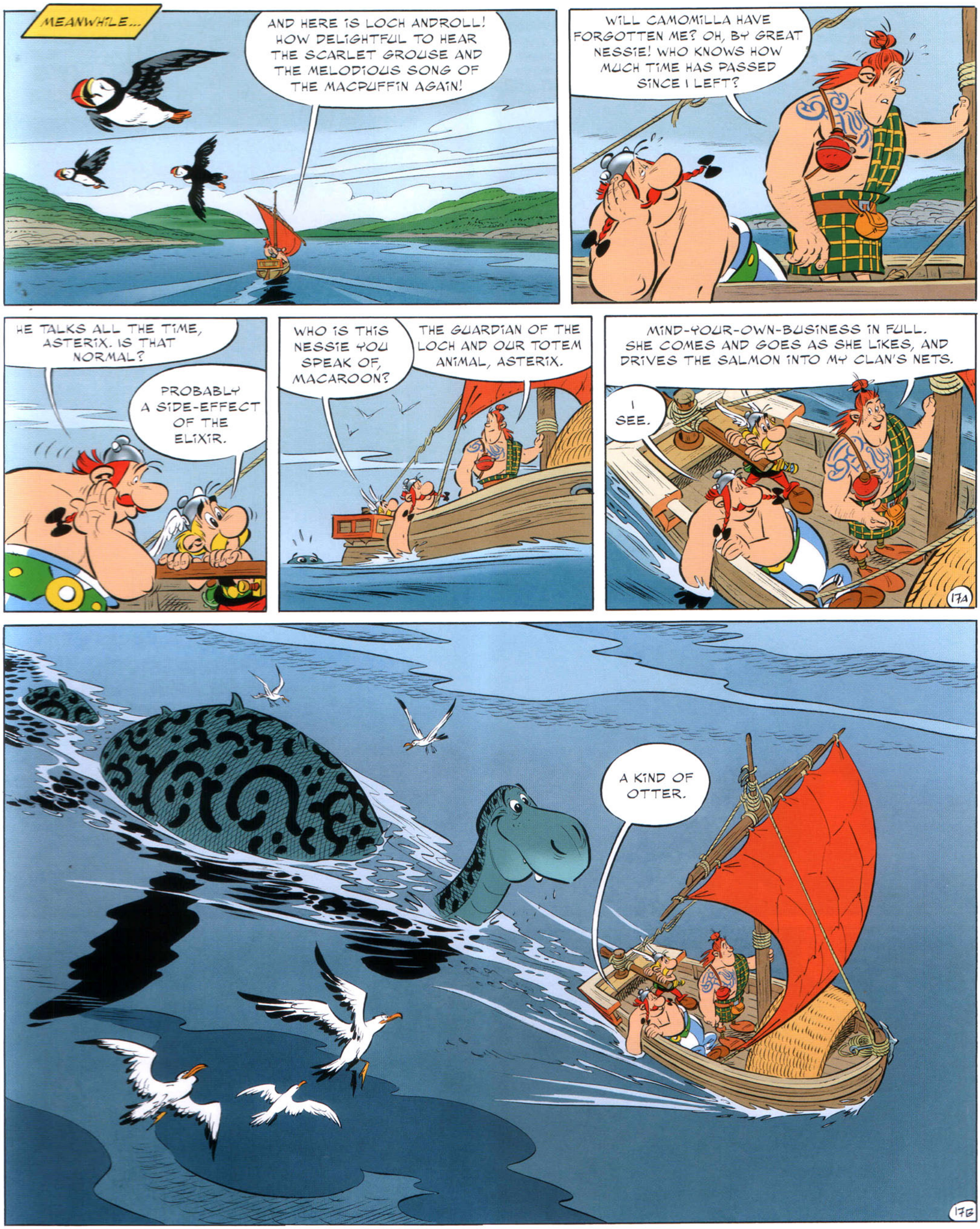

AND SO, ONE FINE SPRING DAY, IT IS TIME TO LEAVE...
NO, OBELIX! IT'S NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE OF TAKING THAT MENHIR WITH US!
ASTERIX, I'M GIVING YOU SOME MAGIC POTION AND A GOURD OF THIS ELIXIR FOR OUR PICTISH FRIEND. ONE SPOONFUL MORNING AND EVENING.
I UNDERSTAND, O DRUID.
DOGMATIX IS RATHER SMALL FOR SUCH A LONG VOYAGE. I'LL LEAVE HIM WITH YOU, GETAFIX. ONE BONE MORNING AND EVENING.
AND I TELL YOU I LOOK RIDICULOUS DRESSED LIKE THIS!
NOT AT ALL, THE EFFECT IS SLIMMING! AND YOU CAN SEE THAT IT GIVES OUR GUEST PLEASURE.
13A
I KNOW IT'S SILLY, BUT I'VE NEVER LIKED MY KNEES.
AND WHEN I CATCH A COLD IT ALWAYS STARTS IN MY FEET.
DON'T LISTEN, GERIATRIX SWEETIE-PIE! EVERYTHING SUITS YOU!
SMACK!
NOW TO BRING MY CENSUS UP TO DATE: MINUS THREE WARRIORS, PLUS ONE DOG... I WISH THESE GAULS WOULDN'T KEEP MOVING ALL THE TIME!
WAIT! WAIT! I'VE COMPOSED A CALEDONIAN TWO-STEP FOR THEIR DEPARTURE!
POC!
SPLASH!
WHAT HAPPENED?
HE MISSED A STEP AGAIN.
13B

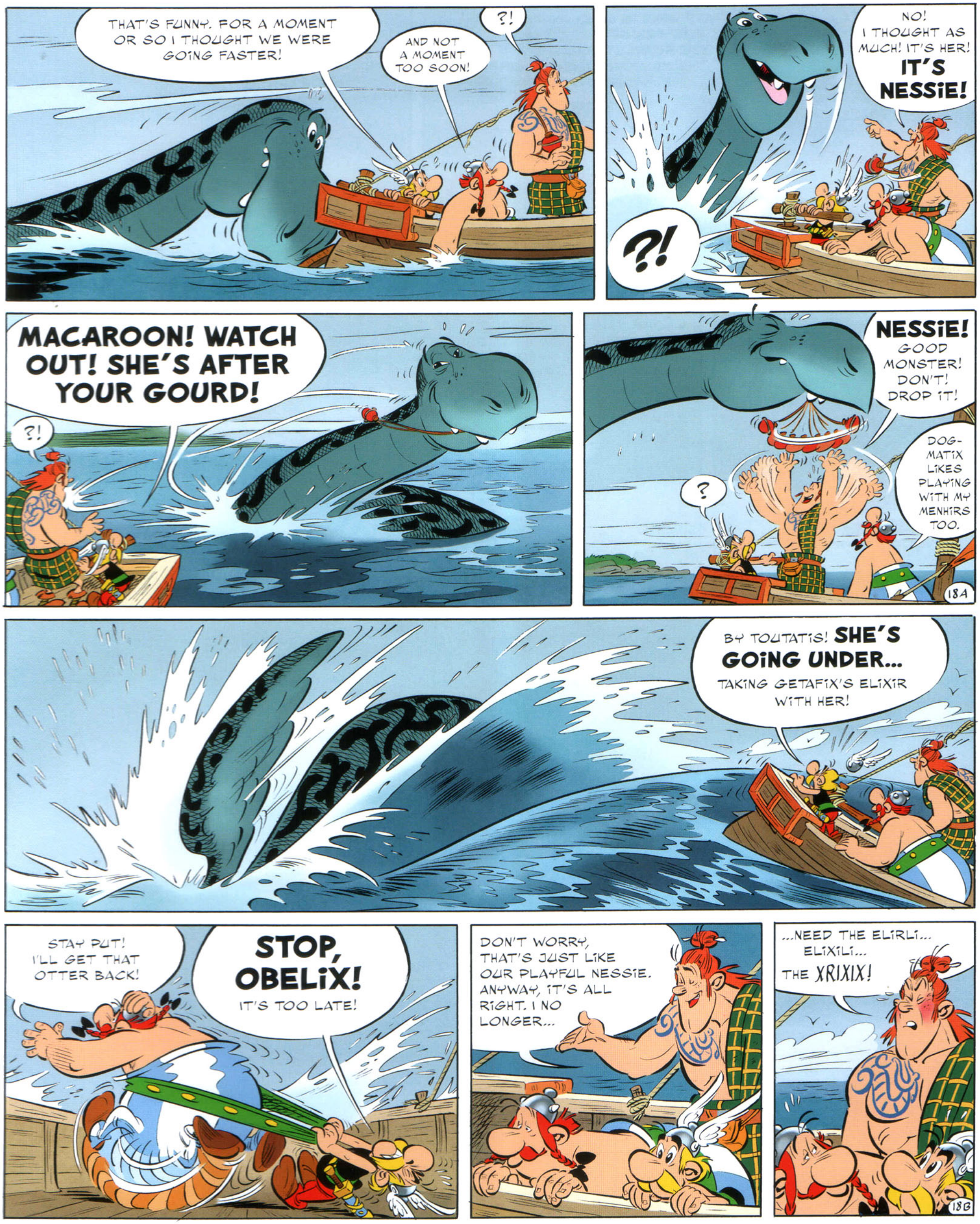

IS IT FAR TO THE LAND OF THE PICTS? CAN I SAIL THE SHIP, ASTERIX? I'M BORED.
NO, OBELIX!
I PROMISED UNHYGIENIX TO BRING HIS NEW BOAT BACK SAFE AND SOUND.
SO I'M NO GOOD EXCEPT FOR LUGGING MENHIRS AROUND, IS THAT IT?
OH, LOOK! A SAIL ON THE HORIZON!
I SEE! SO YOU'RE CHANGING THE SUBJECT!
MAYBE OUR COUSINS THE BRITONS?
NO, LOOK, IT'S A PIRATE SHIP!
14A
IT WORKED! BY THE GREAT GOD LUGH! THE ELIXIR WORKED ON ME! I'M TALKING! I'M TALKING! I'M TALKING!
HEAR THAT? I'M TALKING! I'M TAAALKING!
HELP, HELP! IT'S THE GAULS! GIDDY GOATS' HORNS, THE GAULS! AND THEY'RE MAKING STRAIGHT FOR US!
AH AH AAAH! I'M TAAALKING! I'M TAAALKING!
HE'S TALKING!
LET'S IGNORE HIM! WE'LL TAKE NO NOTICE AND PRETEND NOT TO UNDERSTAND!
OH, MY FRIENDS! I'M SO GLAD WE CAN TALK! MY NAME IS MACAROON, AND I HAVE SO MUCH TO TELL YOU!
WHY DON'T WE HAVE FUN WITH THE PIRATES FIRST?
NO, NO. LET YOUR FRIEND TELL HIS STORY! THERE'S NO HURRY! NOOO! FRIENDS FIRST! FRIENDS, ROMANS, COUNTRYMEN FIRST!
14B

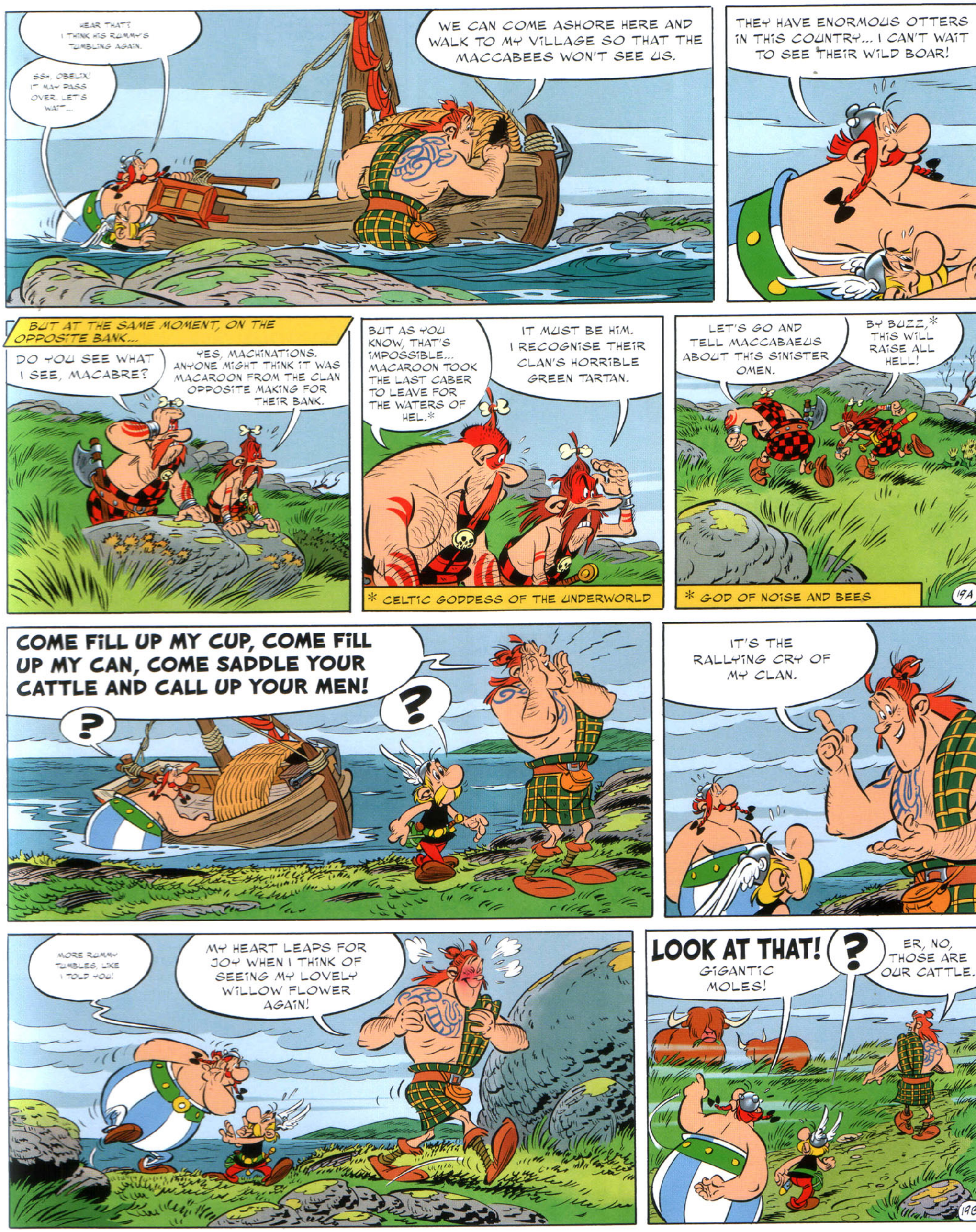


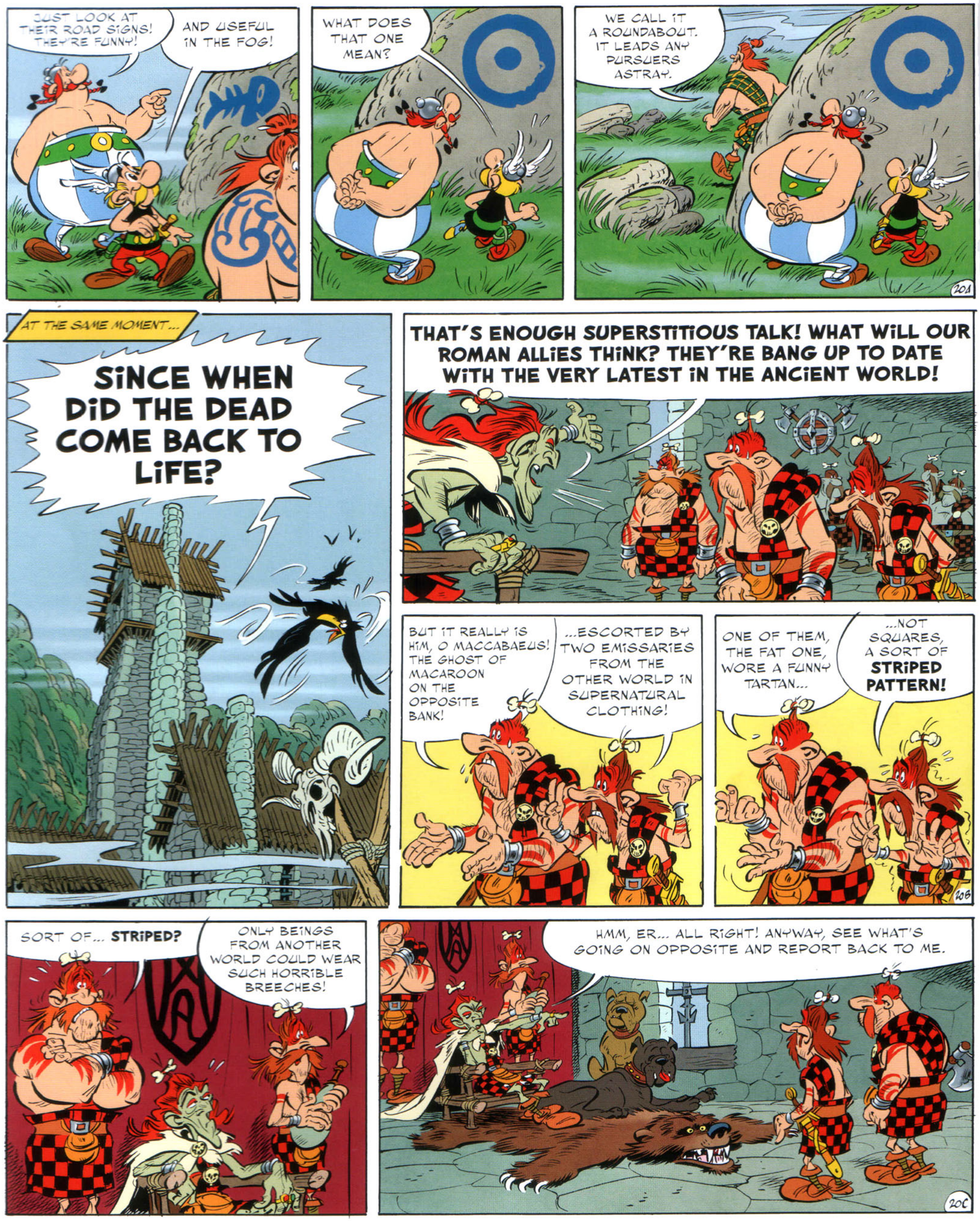
I WAS LEADING A PEACEFUL LIFE WITH MY CLAN, NEAR THE CLEAR WATERS OF LOCH ANDROLL...
...WHEN I FELL INTO AN AMBUSH SET BY THE ODIOUS MACCA-BAEUS.
MACCA-BAEUS?
THE CHIEFTAIN OF THE MACCABEES CLAN ON THE OPPOSITE BANK. HE HAD ME TIED TO A TREE TRUNK AND THROWN INTO THE WATER. IT'S CALLED TOSSING THE CABER.
WHY DID HE DO THAT, O PICT?
THAT WRETCH WANTED CAMOMILLA, THE ADOPTED DAUGHTER OF OUR LATE KING THE GOOD MAC II, FOR HIMSELF!
CAMOMILLA, MY LOVELY FIANCÉE, WHOSE DIAPHANOUS BEAUTY MAKES THE SPARKLING WATERS OF THE LOCH LOOK MURKY...
EEEURGH!!
'SCUSE ME, BUT SOPPY LOVE STORIES CHURN ME UP!
15A
LISTEN, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ALL THAT! COULD YOU BEGIN AGAIN AT THE BEGINNING, COUSIN?
OOO...
PERSONALLY I'D RATHER HAVE A QUICK SUMMARY, IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU...
AND THE CROSSING CONTINUES...
IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND MY COUNTRY, I MUST MENTION OUR CLANS, WHICH HAVE BEEN DIVIDED SINCE THE DEATH OF KING MAC II. IT'S PERFECTLY SIMPLE...
THERE ARE THE EASTERN PICTS AND THE WESTERN PICTS, THE SEA-GOING PICTS WHO PAINT THEMSELVES GREEN, AND THE BLUE PICTS WHO ARE FLESH-COLOURED. THEN THERE ARE THE BROWN PICTS, THE TWO-TONE PICTS...
I THINK I PREFERRED IT WHEN HE'D LOST HIS VOICE.
15B


AT THE SAME TIME, FURTHER NORTH ON A REMOTE PART OF THE COAST...
SO THIS IS THE FAMOUS LAND OF THE PICTS, FALLACIUS...
CAREFUL, PRETENTIUS! IN GENERAL THOSE BARBARIANS LEAVE US BRUISED IN ALL THE COLOURS OF THE RAINBOW.
YOU'RE RIGHT. ACCORDING TO OUR EMISSARIES, IT'S EASY TO GET STUCK IN THIS MARSHY TERRAIN...
ASK THAT SHEPHERD OVER THERE THE WAY.
THE MACCABEES CLAN? EASY! THEY'RE RED... EACH CLAN HAS ITS OWN COLOUR.
16A
NOT A BAD IDEA. AND WHAT DO YOU CALL THESE, PICT?
PICTOGRAMS.
WHAT DOES THAT ONE OVER THERE SAY?
ROAD LIABLE TO FLOODING.
OH. IS IT SAFE?
FAIRLY SAFE.
?
COME ON, THEN. LET'S GET OUT OF THIS QUAGMIRE AND CARRY ON, BY JUPITER.
16B


MEANWHILE...
AND HERE IS LOCH ANDROLL! HOW DELIGHTFUL TO HEAR THE SCARLET GROUSE AND THE MELODIOUS SONG OF THE MACPUFFIN AGAIN!
WILL CAMOMILLA HAVE FORGOTTEN ME? OH, BY GREAT NESSIE! WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH TIME HAS PASSED SINCE I LEFT?
HE TALKS ALL THE TIME, ASTERIX. IS THAT NORMAL?
PROBABLY A SIDE-EFFECT OF THE ELIXIR.
WHO IS THIS NESSIE YOU SPEAK OF, MACAROON?
THE GUARDIAN OF THE LOCH AND OUR TOTEM ANIMAL, ASTERIX.
MIND-YOUR-OWN-BUSINESS IN FULL. SHE COMES AND GOES AS SHE LIKES, AND DRIVES THE SALMON INTO MY CLAN'S NETS.
I SEE.
17A
A KIND OF OTTER.
17B

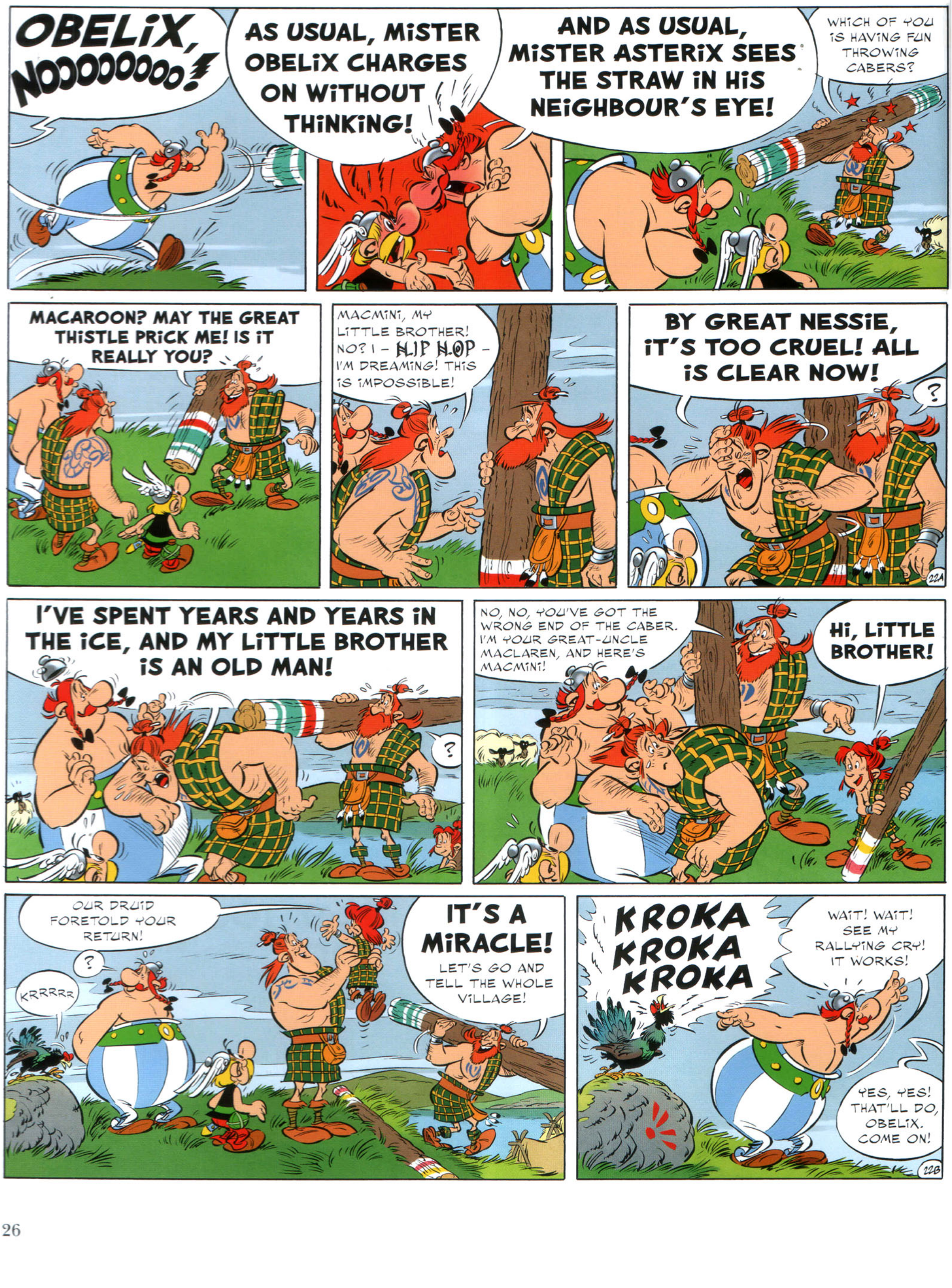

THAT'S FUNNY. FOR A MOMENT OR SO I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING FASTER!
AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!
?!
NO! I THOUGHT AS MUCH! IT'S HER! IT'S NESSIE!
?!
MACAROON! WATCH OUT! SHE'S AFTER YOUR GOURD!
?!
NESSIE! GOOD MONSTER! DON'T! DROP IT!
?
DOGMATIX LIKES PLAYING WITH MY MENHIRS TOO.
18A
BY TOUTATIS! SHE'S GOING UNDER... TAKING GETAFIX'S ELIXIR WITH HER!
STAY PUT! I'LL GET THAT OTTER BACK!
STOP, OBELIX! IT'S TOO LATE!
DON'T WORRY, THAT'S JUST LIKE OUR PLAYFUL NESSIE. ANYWAY, IT'S ALL RIGHT. I NO LONGER...
...NEED THE ELIRLI... ELIXILI... THE XRIXIX!
18B

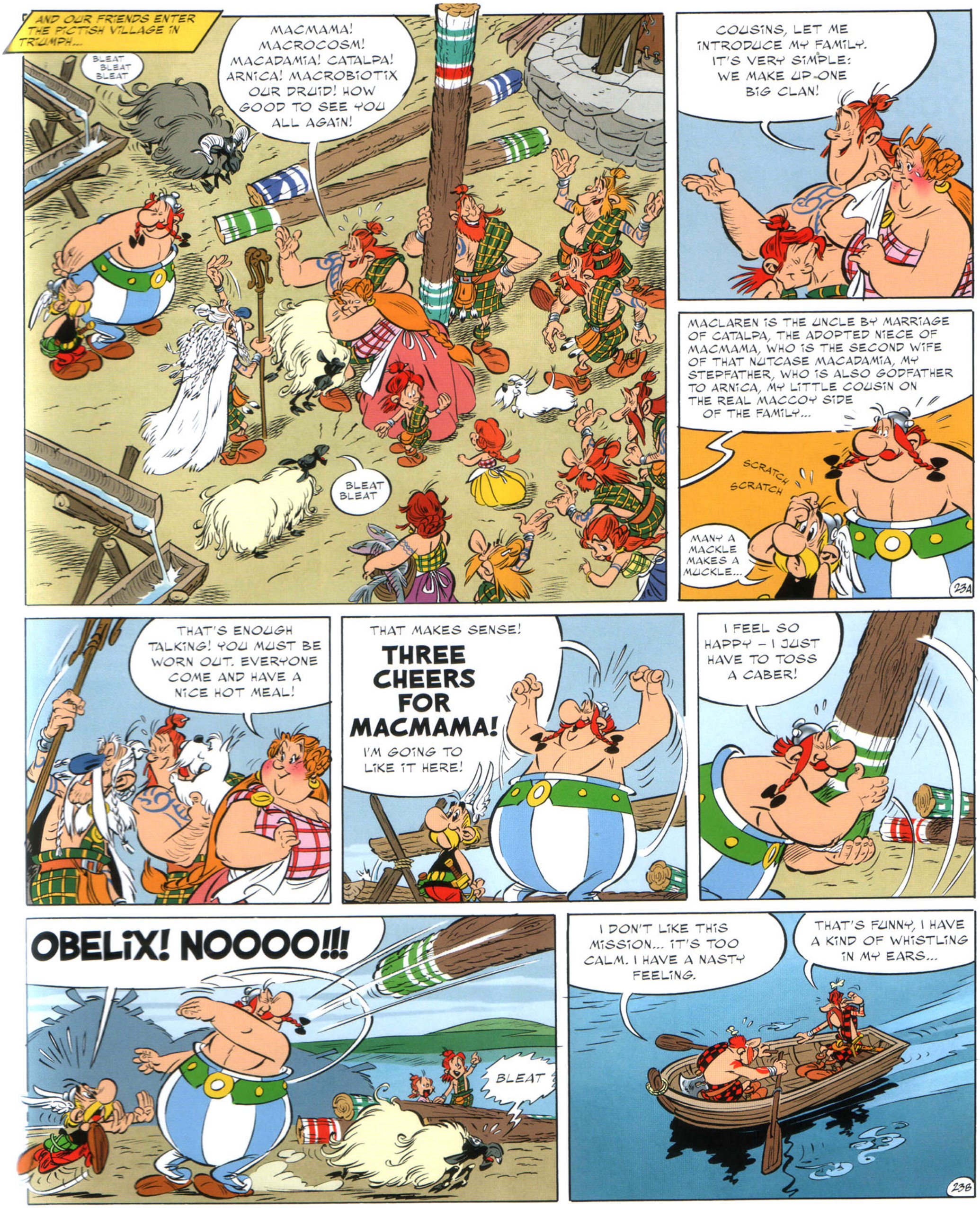

HEAR THAT? I THINK HIS RUMMY'S TUMBLING AGAIN.
SSH, OBELIX! IT MAY PASS OVER. LET'S WAIT...
WE CAN COME ASHORE HERE AND WALK TO MY VILLAGE SO THAT THE MACCABEES WON'T SEE US.
THEY HAVE ENORMOUS OTTERS IN THIS COUNTRY... I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THEIR WILD BOAR!
BUT AT THE SAME MOMENT, ON THE OPPOSITE BANK...
DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE, MACABRE?
YES, MACHINATIONS. ANYONE MIGHT THINK IT WAS MACAROON FROM THE CLAN OPPOSITE MAKING FOR THEIR BANK.
BUT AS YOU KNOW, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE... MACAROON TOOK THE LAST CABER TO LEAVE FOR THE WATERS OF HEL.*
IT MUST BE HIM. I RECOGNISE THEIR CLAN'S HORRIBLE GREEN TARTAN.
* CELTIC GODDESS OF THE UNDERWORLD
LET'S GO AND TELL MACCABAEUS ABOUT THIS SINISTER OMEN.
BY BUZZ,* THIS WILL RAISE ALL HELL!
* GOD OF NOISE AND BEES
19A
COME FILL UP MY CUP, COME FILL UP MY CAN, COME SADDLE YOUR CATTLE AND CALL UP YOUR MEN!
?
?
IT'S THE RALLYING CRY OF MY CLAN.
MORE RUMMY TUMBLES, LIKE I TOLD YOU!
MY HEART LEAPS FOR JOY WHEN I THINK OF SEEING MY LOVELY WILLOW FLOWER AGAIN!
LOOK AT THAT! GIGANTIC MOLES!
?
ER, NO, THOSE ARE OUR CATTLE.
19B



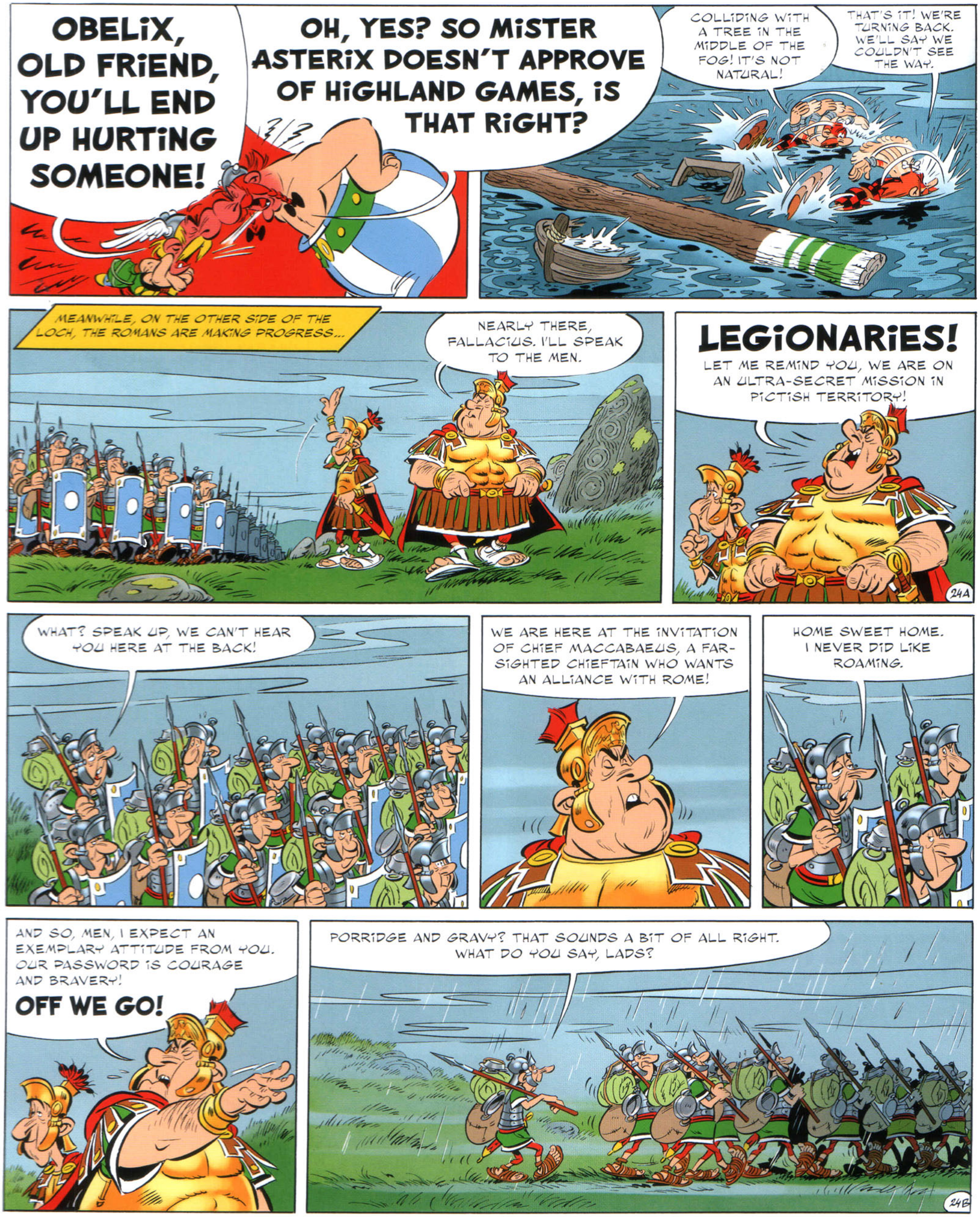
JUST LOOK AT THEIR ROAD SIGNS! THEY'RE FUNNY!
AND USEFUL IN THE FOG!
WHAT DOES THAT ONE MEAN?
WE CALL IT A ROUNDABOUT. IT LEADS ANY PURSUERS ASTRAY.
20A
AT THE SAME MOMENT...
SINCE WHEN DID THE DEAD COME BACK TO LIFE?
THAT'S ENOUGH SUPERSTITIOUS TALK! WHAT WILL OUR ROMAN ALLIES THINK? THEY'RE BANG UP TO DATE WITH THE VERY LATEST IN THE ANCIENT WORLD!
BUT IT REALLY IS HIM, O MACCABAEUS! THE GHOST OF MACAROON ON THE OPPOSITE BANK!
...ESCORTED BY TWO EMISSARIES FROM THE OTHER WORLD IN SUPERNATURAL CLOTHING!
ONE OF THEM, THE FAT ONE, WORE A FUNNY TARTAN...
...NOT SQUARES, A SORT OF STRIPED PATTERN!
20B
SORT OF... STRIPED?
ONLY BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD COULD WEAR SUCH HORRIBLE BREECHES!
HMM, ER... ALL RIGHT! ANYWAY, SEE WHAT'S GOING ON OPPOSITE AND REPORT BACK TO ME.
20C


AT THE SAME TIME...
AND HERE IS MY VILLAGE!
KROKA KROKA KROKA
WELL?
CAN'T I GIVE OUR OWN RALLYING CRY?
21A
ZZZZZZZZZWWIIIIIIIIIII...
HELLO... PEOPLE ARE REPLYING!
I'D CALL IT MORE OF A WHISTLING...
?!
WWIIIIII...
SLAM
AHA! FEAR NOTHING! IT'S JUST A LITTLE GAME POPULAR IN THESE PARTS, CALLED TOSSING THE CABER!
CAN I PLAY TOO? CAN I PLAY TOO?
21B


OBELIX, NOOOOOOOO!
AS USUAL, MISTER OBELIX CHARGES ON WITHOUT THINKING!
AND AS USUAL, MISTER ASTERIX SEES THE STRAW IN HIS NEIGHBOUR'S EYE!
WHICH OF YOU IS HAVING FUN THROWING CABERS?
MACAROON? MAY THE GREAT THISTLE PRICK ME! IS IT REALLY YOU?
MACMINI, MY LITTLE BROTHER! NO? I – HIP HOP – I'M DREAMING! THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!
BY GREAT NESSIE, IT'S TOO CRUEL! ALL IS CLEAR NOW!
?
22A
I'VE SPENT YEARS AND YEARS IN THE ICE, AND MY LITTLE BROTHER IS AN OLD MAN!
?
NO, NO, YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG END OF THE CABER. I'M YOUR GREAT-UNCLE MACLAREN, AND HERE'S MACMINI!
HI, LITTLE BROTHER!
OUR DRUID FORETOLD YOUR RETURN!
?
KRRRRR
IT'S A MIRACLE!
LET'S GO AND TELL THE WHOLE VILLAGE!
KROKA KROKA KROKA
WAIT! WAIT! SEE MY RALLYING CRY! IT WORKS!
YES, YES! THAT'LL DO, OBELIX. COME ON!
22B

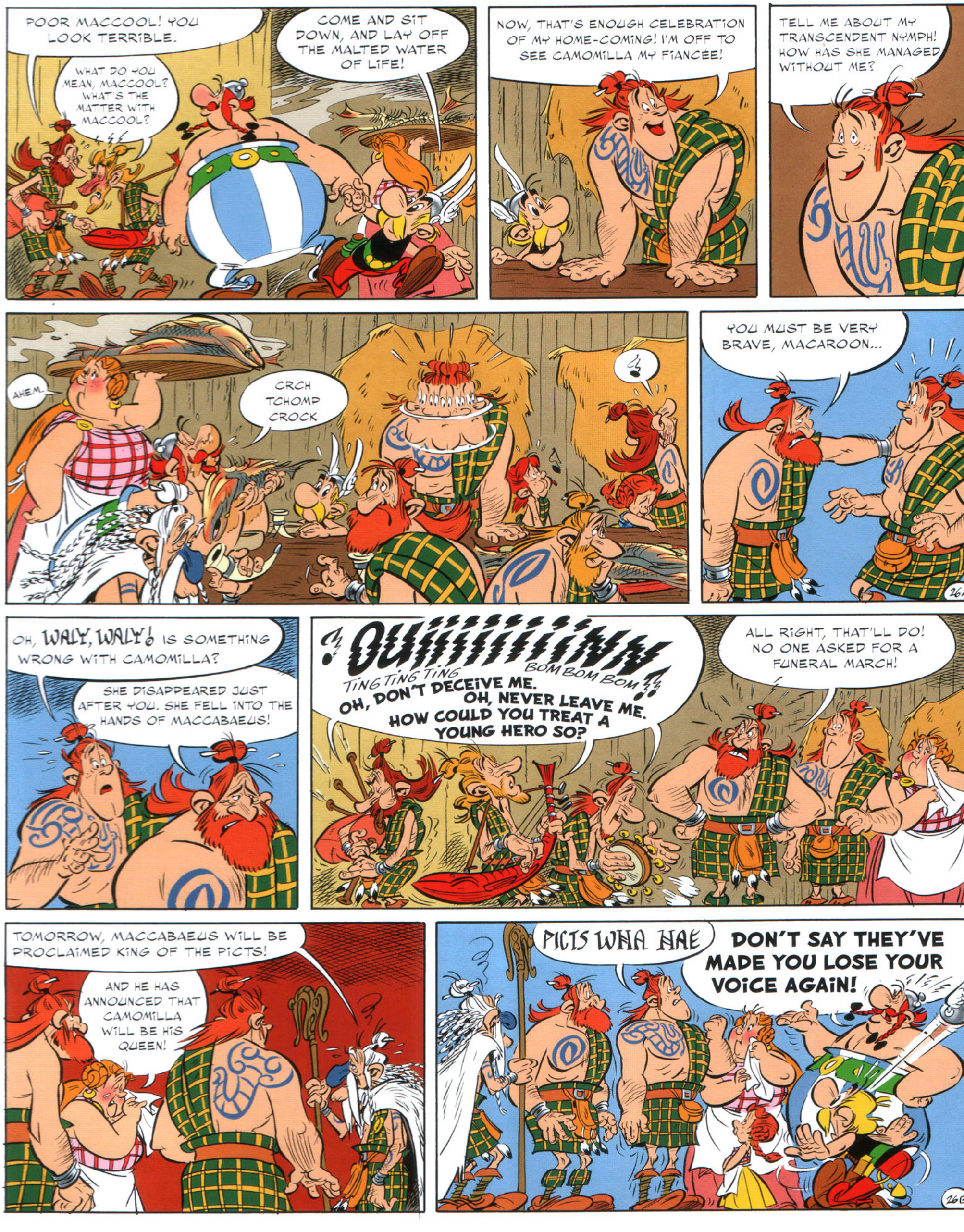


AND OUR FRIENDS ENTER THE PICTISH VILLAGE IN TRIUMPH...
BLEAT BLEAT BLEAT
MACMAMA! MACROCOSM! MACADAMIA! CATALPA! ARNICA! MACROBIOTIX OUR DRUID! HOW GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN!
BLEAT BLEAT
COUSINS, LET ME INTRODUCE MY FAMILY. IT'S VERY SIMPLE: WE MAKE UP ONE BIG CLAN!
MACLAREN IS THE UNCLE BY MARRIAGE OF CATALPA, THE ADOPTED NIECE OF MACMAMA, WHO IS THE SECOND WIFE OF THAT NUTCASE MACADAMIA, MY STEPFATHER, WHO IS ALSO GODFATHER TO ARNICA, MY LITTLE COUSIN ON THE REAL MACCOY SIDE OF THE FAMILY...
SCRATCH SCRATCH
MANY A MACKLE MAKES A MUCKLE...
23A
THAT'S ENOUGH TALKING! YOU MUST BE WORN OUT. EVERYONE COME AND HAVE A NICE HOT MEAL!
THAT MAKES SENSE!
THREE CHEERS FOR MACMAMA!
I'M GOING TO LIKE IT HERE!
I FEEL SO HAPPY – I JUST HAVE TO TOSS A CABER!
OBELIX! NOOOO!!!
BLEAT
I DON'T LIKE THIS MISSION... IT'S TOO CALM. I HAVE A NASTY FEELING.
THAT'S FUNNY, I HAVE A KIND OF WHISTLING IN MY EARS...
23B


OBELIX, OLD FRIEND, YOU'LL END UP HURTING SOMEONE!
OH, YES? SO MISTER ASTERIX DOESN'T APPROVE OF HIGHLAND GAMES, IS THAT RIGHT?
COLLIDING WITH A TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOG! IT'S NOT NATURAL!
THAT'S IT! WE'RE TURNING BACK. WE'LL SAY WE COULDN'T SEE THE WAY.
MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LOCH, THE ROMANS ARE MAKING PROGRESS...
NEARLY THERE, FALLACIUS. I'LL SPEAK TO THE MEN.
LEGIONARIES!
LET ME REMIND YOU, WE ARE ON AN ULTRA-SECRET MISSION IN PICTISH TERRITORY!
24A
WHAT? SPEAK UP, WE CAN'T HEAR YOU HERE AT THE BACK!
WE ARE HERE AT THE INVITATION OF CHIEF MACCABAEUS, A FAR-SIGHTED CHIEFTAIN WHO WANTS AN ALLIANCE WITH ROME!
HOME SWEET HOME. I NEVER DID LIKE ROAMING.
AND SO, MEN, I EXPECT AN EXEMPLARY ATTITUDE FROM YOU. OUR PASSWORD IS COURAGE AND BRAVERY!
OFF WE GO!
PORRIDGE AND GRAVY? THAT SOUNDS A BIT OF ALL RIGHT. WHAT DO YOU SAY, LADS?
24B

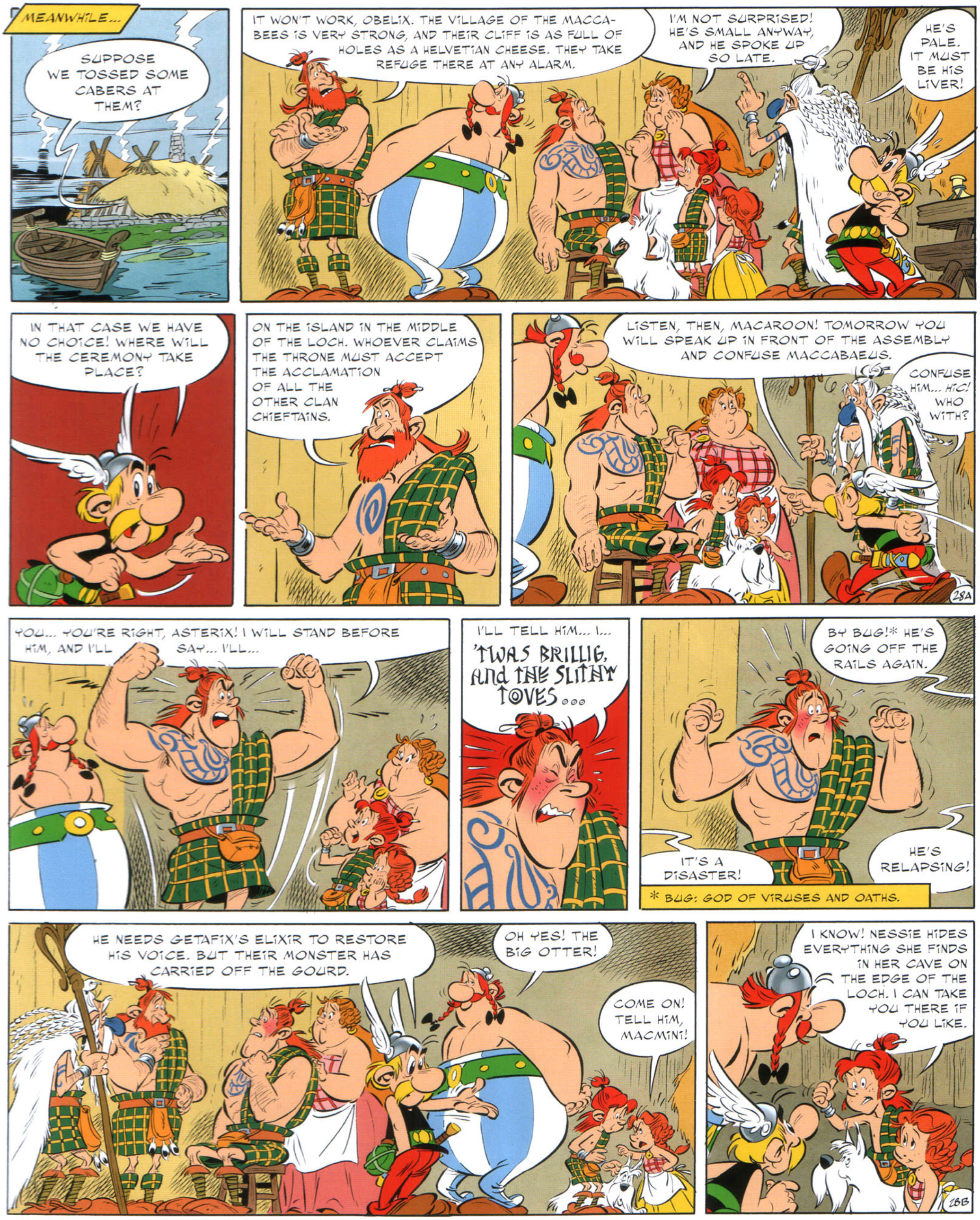


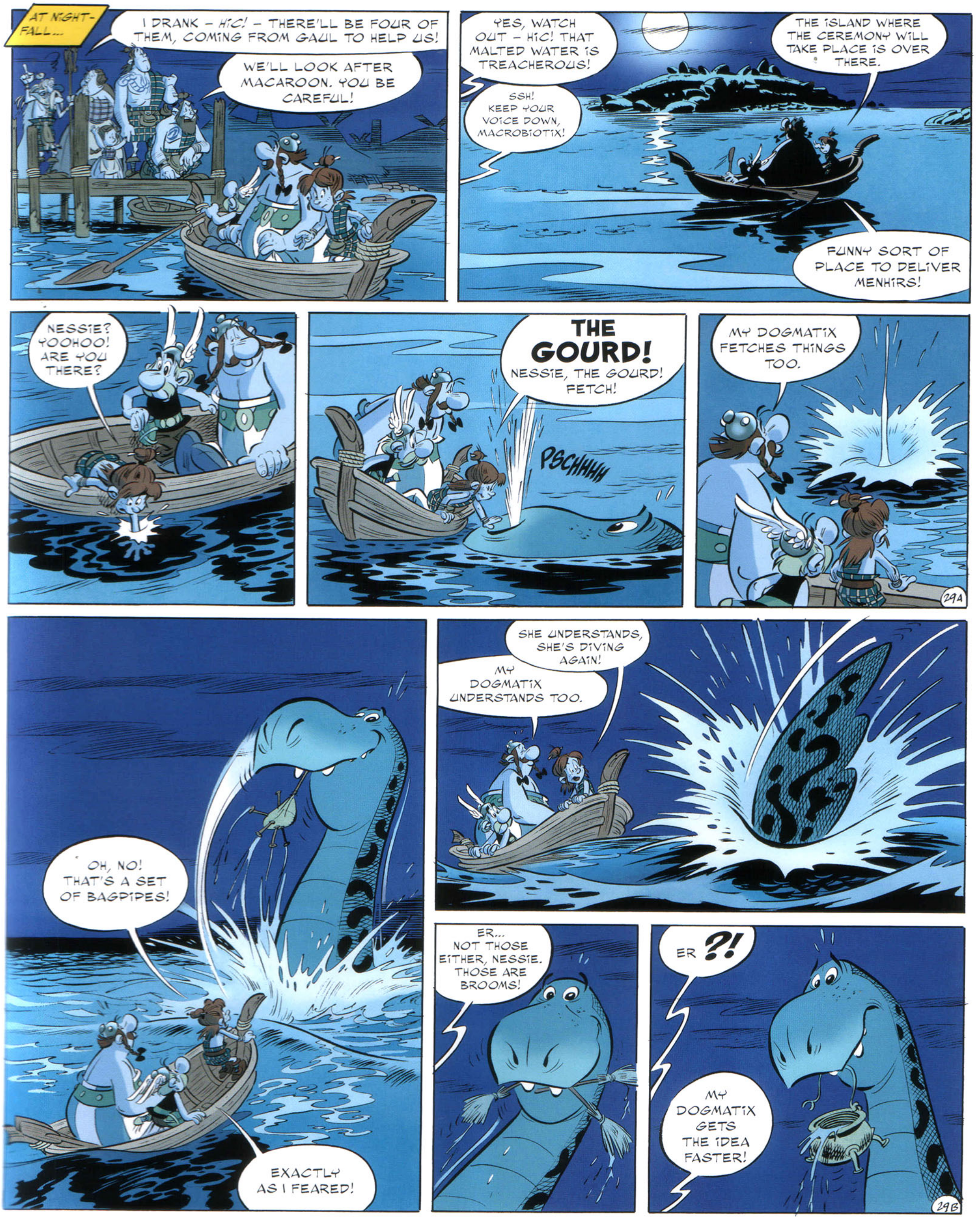
THE FAMILY PARTY FOR THE RETURN OF MACAROON IS IN FULL SWING...
THIS IS VERY GOOD, MACMAMA. WHAT IS IT?
SALMON PARCELS. AND THEN THERE'LL BE MACKEREL WITH MACARONI.
SO I MANAGED TO GET ONE HAND FREE, BUT THE CURRENTS KEPT TAKING ME FURTHER NORTH...
MACAMA... COMACA... COMRADES!
HUSH! LISTEN!
IT'S OUR DRUID SPEAKING.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU MACAROON WOULD BE BACK? REMEMBER? HIC! I HAD A VISION IN THE... THE MALTED WATER OF LIFE!
YES.
VERY TRUE.
MACROBIOTIX DID SAY SO!
I SAW A BLOCK OF ICE... HIC! AN ENORMOUS BLOCK OF ICE, FLOATING.
MALTED WATER?
IT'S OUR NATIONAL DRINK, MADE OF FERMENTED MALT. THE WATER OF LIFE. IT'S VERY STRONG!
25A
THANKS TO IT, I SURVIVED IN THE ICE. WE DRINK IT WITH PLENTY OF ADDED WATER, BUT THE MACCABEES DRINK IMMODERATELY.
OUiiiiiiiiiN
BOOM BOOM
TINGALING, TINGALONG.
HUSHABYE BABY ON THE TREE TOP, WHEN THE WIND BLOWS YOU'LL FALL IN THE LOCH
AH, A LOCH ANDROLL TUNE PLAYED BY OUR BARDS!
CLACK CLACK CLACK CLACKCLACK
ALL THIS NOISE DURING A MEAL... IT CAN'T BE A GOOD IDEA!
OBELIX!
THINK BEFORE YOU HIT ANYONE. THESE PEOPLE MAY RESPECT THEIR BARDS MORE THAN WE RESPECT OURS.
YOU THINK SO?
YES... HERE THEY USUALLY JUST CLAP THEIR HANDS.
AH! YOU SEE?
25B

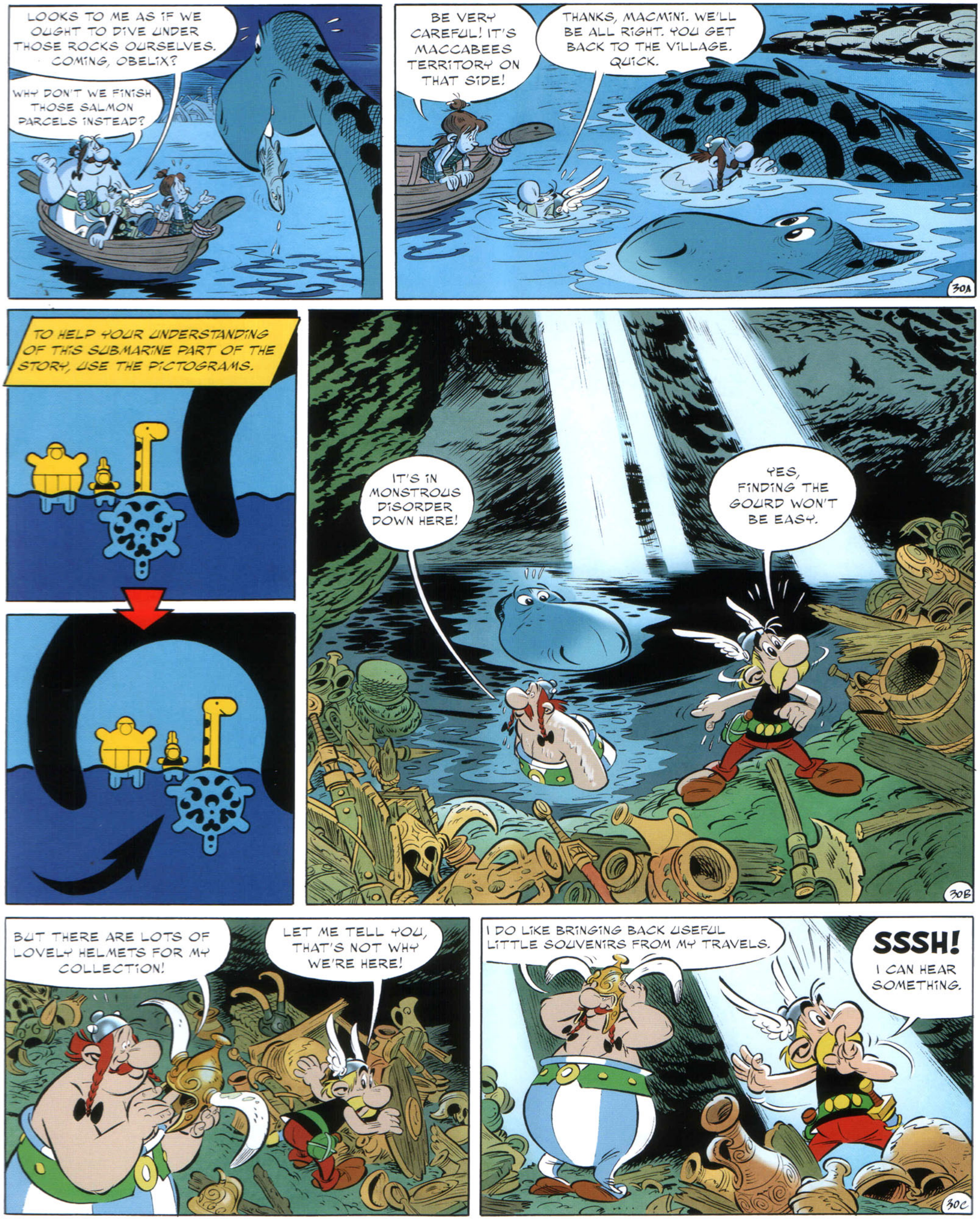


POOR MACCOOL! YOU LOOK TERRIBLE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MACCOOL? WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MACCOOL?
COME AND SIT DOWN, AND LAY OFF THE MALTED WATER OF LIFE!
NOW, THAT'S ENOUGH CELEBRATION OF MY HOME-COMING! I'M OFF TO SEE CAMOMILLA MY FIANCÉE!
TELL ME ABOUT MY TRANSCENDENT NYMPH! HOW HAS SHE MANAGED WITHOUT ME?
AHEM...
CRCH TCHOMP CROCK
YOU MUST BE VERY BRAVE, MACAROON...
26A
OH, WALY, WALY! IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH CAMOMILLA?
SHE DISAPPEARED JUST AFTER YOU. SHE FELL INTO THE HANDS OF MACCABAEUS!
OUIIIIIIIINN
TING TING TING
BOM BOM BOM
OH, DON'T DECEIVE ME. OH, NEVER LEAVE ME. HOW COULD YOU TREAT A YOUNG HERO SO?
ALL RIGHT, THAT'LL DO! NO ONE ASKED FOR A FUNERAL MARCH!
TOMORROW, MACCABAEUS WILL BE PROCLAIMED KING OF THE PICTS!
AND HE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT CAMOMILLA WILL BE HIS QUEEN!
PICTS WHA HAE
DON'T SAY THEY'VE MADE YOU LOSE YOUR VOICE AGAIN!
26B

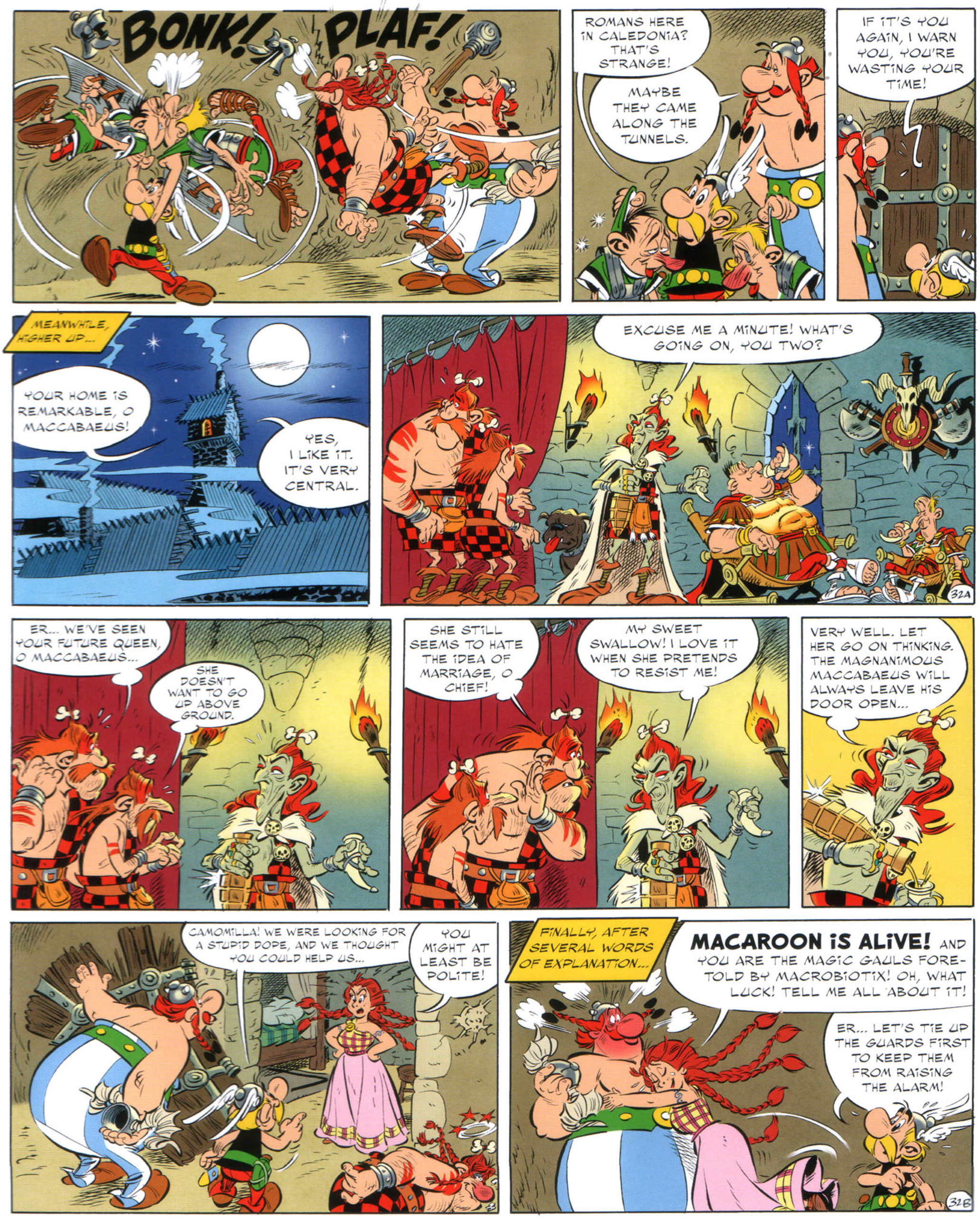

AT THE SAME MOMENT, ON THE OPPOSITE BANK...
MACCABAEUS, FUTURE KING OF THE PICTS, WELCOMES HIS ROMAN ALLIES!
AVE MACCABAEUS. THROUGH US, JULIUS CAESAR'S VANGUARD SALUTES YOU!
PORRIDGE AND GRAVY!
WHAT'S WRONG? WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO GIVE THE PASSWORD?
27A
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR THE CEREMONY, O ROMAN!
NO PROBLEMS – THE WAY WAS WELL SIGNPOSTED.
COME ON UP AND I'LL TELL YOU MY PLANS!
NOT YOU, YOU IDIOTS. YOU STAY HERE AND FRATERNISE WITH OUR ALLIES.
ER... AVE!
HOW'S TRICKS?
THE TIMES ARE OUT OF JOINT, AS YOU MIGHT SAY.
THAT'S RIGHT...
AND IS THAT YOUR NATURAL COLOUR?
27B

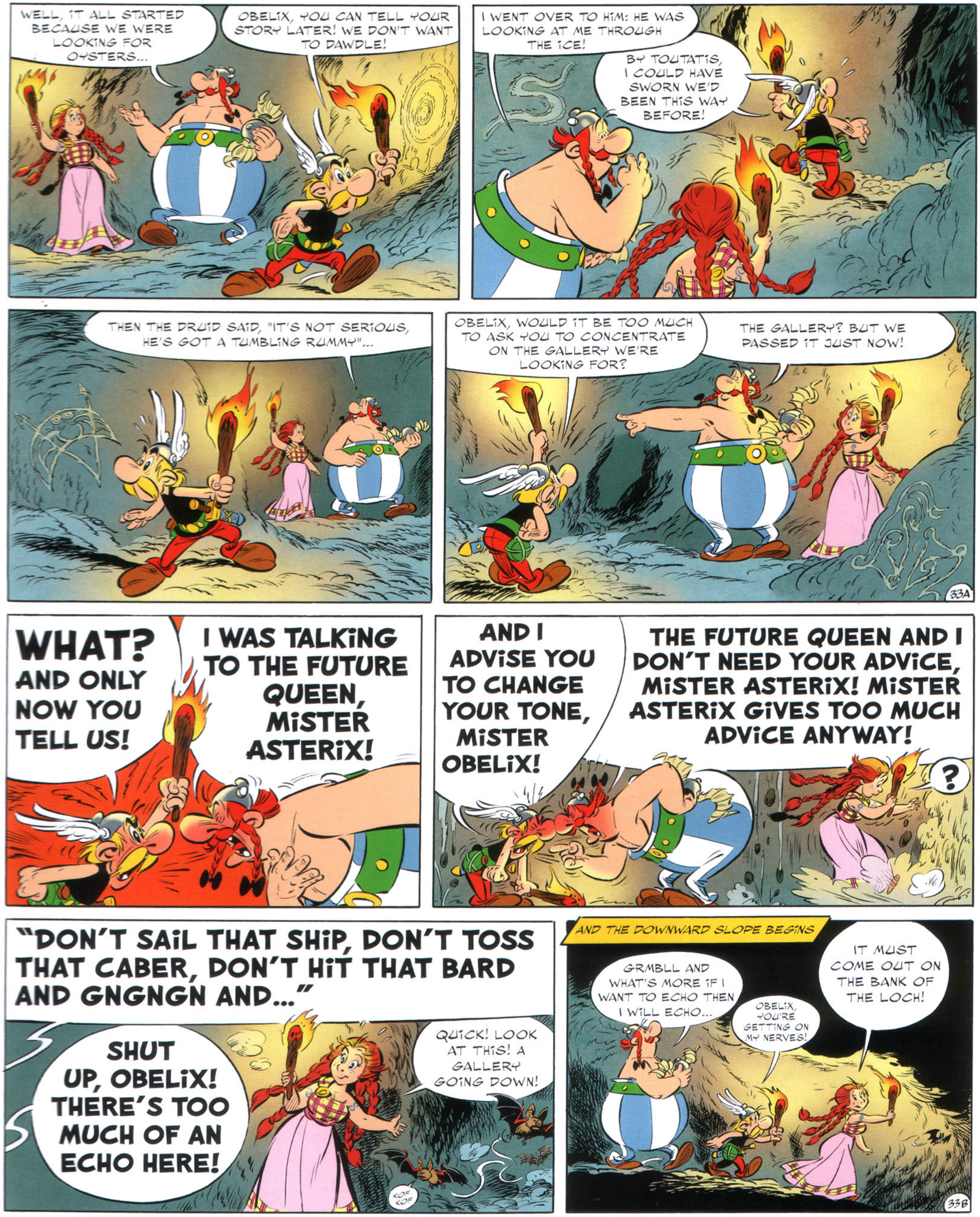

MEANWHILE...
SUPPOSE WE TOSSED SOME CABERS AT THEM?
IT WON'T WORK, OBELIX. THE VILLAGE OF THE MACCABEES IS VERY STRONG, AND THEIR CLIFF IS AS FULL OF HOLES AS A HELVETIAN CHEESE. THEY TAKE REFUGE THERE AT ANY ALARM.
I'M NOT SURPRISED! HE'S SMALL ANYWAY, AND HE SPOKE UP SO LATE.
HE'S PALE. IT MUST BE HIS LIVER!
IN THAT CASE WE HAVE NO CHOICE! WHERE WILL THE CEREMONY TAKE PLACE?
ON THE ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOCH. WHOEVER CLAIMS THE THRONE MUST ACCEPT THE ACCLAMATION OF ALL THE OTHER CLAN CHIEFTAINS.
LISTEN, THEN, MACAROON! TOMORROW YOU WILL SPEAK UP IN FRONT OF THE ASSEMBLY AND CONFUSE MACCABAEUS.
CONFUSE HIM... HIC! WHO WITH?
28A
YOU... YOU'RE RIGHT, ASTERIX! I WILL STAND BEFORE HIM, AND I'LL SAY... I'LL...
I'LL TELL HIM... I...
'TWAS BRILLIG, AND THE SLITHY TOVES...
BY BUG!* HE'S GOING OFF THE RAILS AGAIN.
IT'S A DISASTER!
HE'S RELAPSING!
* BUG: GOD OF VIRUSES AND OATHS.
HE NEEDS GETAFIX'S ELIXIR TO RESTORE HIS VOICE. BUT THEIR MONSTER HAS CARRIED OFF THE GOURD.
OH YES! THE BIG OTTER!
COME ON! TELL HIM, MACMINI!
I KNOW! NESSIE HIDES EVERYTHING SHE FINDS IN HER CAVE ON THE EDGE OF THE LOCH. I CAN TAKE YOU THERE IF YOU LIKE.
28B


AT NIGHTFALL...
I DRANK – HIC! – THERE'LL BE FOUR OF THEM, COMING FROM GAUL TO HELP US!
WE'LL LOOK AFTER MACAROON. YOU BE CAREFUL!
YES, WATCH OUT – HIC! THAT MALTED WATER IS TREACHEROUS!
SSH! KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, MACROBIOTIX!
THE ISLAND WHERE THE CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE IS OVER THERE.
FUNNY SORT OF PLACE TO DELIVER MENHIRS!
NESSIE? YOOHOO! ARE YOU THERE?
THE GOURD!
NESSIE, THE GOURD! FETCH!
PSCHHHH
MY DOGMATIX FETCHES THINGS TOO.
29A
OH, NO! THAT'S A SET OF BAGPIPES!
EXACTLY AS I FEARED!
SHE UNDERSTANDS, SHE'S DIVING AGAIN!
MY DOGMATIX UNDERSTANDS TOO.
ER... NOT THOSE EITHER, NESSIE. THOSE ARE BROOMS!
ER ?!
MY DOGMATIX GETS THE IDEA FASTER!
29B


LOOKS TO ME AS IF WE OUGHT TO DIVE UNDER THOSE ROCKS OURSELVES. COMING, OBELIX?
WHY DON'T WE FINISH THOSE SALMON PARCELS INSTEAD?
BE VERY CAREFUL! IT'S MACCABEES TERRITORY ON THAT SIDE!
THANKS, MACMINI. WE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. YOU GET BACK TO THE VILLAGE. QUICK.
30A
TO HELP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THIS SUBMARINE PART OF THE STORY, USE THE PICTOGRAMS.
IT'S IN MONSTROUS DISORDER DOWN HERE!
YES, FINDING THE GOURD WON'T BE EASY.
30B
BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF LOVELY HELMETS FOR MY COLLECTION!
LET ME TELL YOU, THAT'S NOT WHY WE'RE HERE!
I DO LIKE BRINGING BACK USEFUL LITTLE SOUVENIRS FROM MY TRAVELS.
SSSH!
I CAN HEAR SOMETHING.
30C

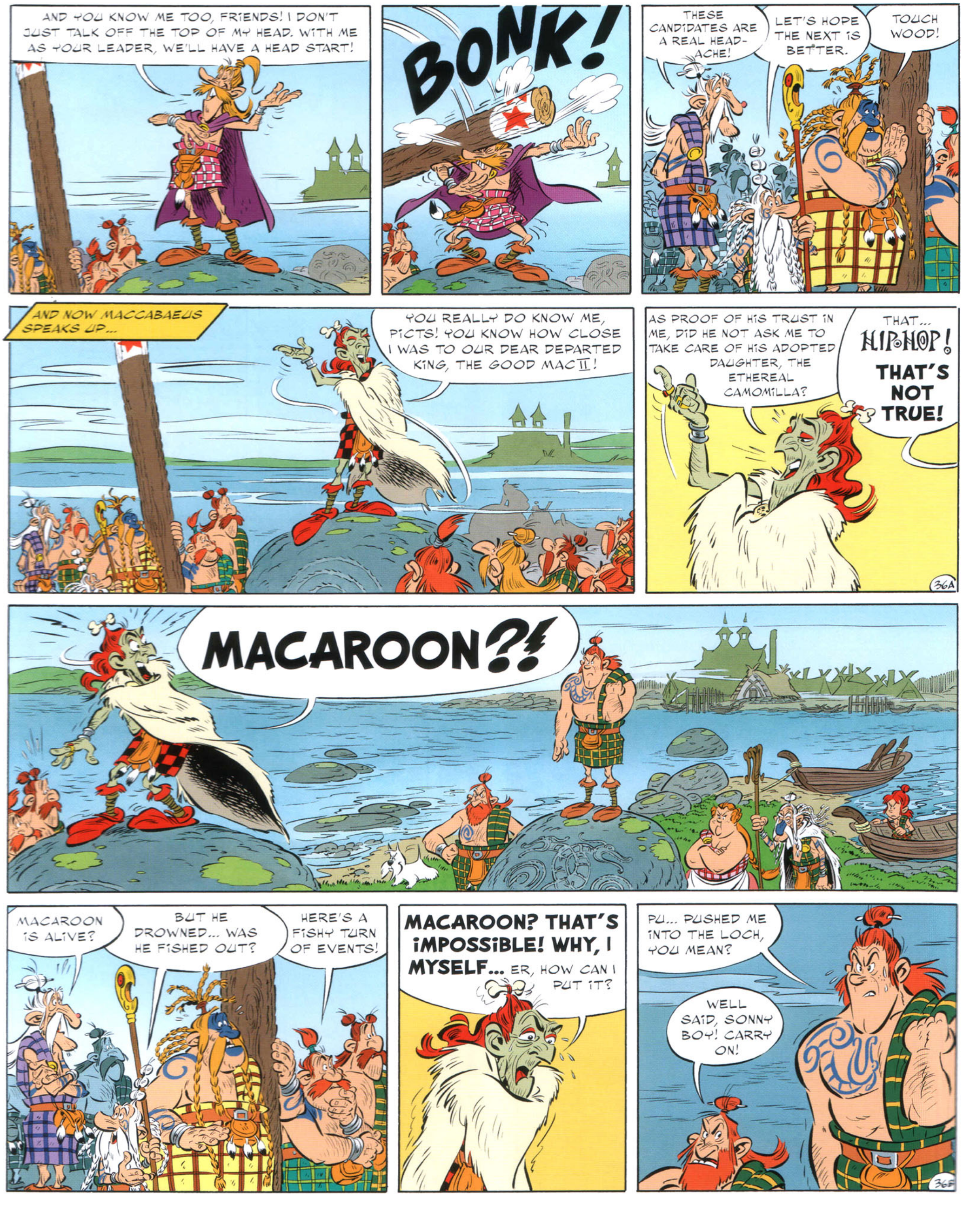

FOLLOW ME, OBELIX. I SEE A GALLERY GOING UPWARDS...
THIS ONE MAKES ME LOOK BETTER DRESSED, DON'T YOU THINK?
I HEAR VOICES THAT WAY. LET'S GO AND SEE...
SEVERAL GALLERIES FURTHER ON...
"PORRIDGE AND GRAVY" – I ASK YOU!
AS SOON AS WE GET HERE THEY PUT US ON SENTRY DUTY IN THIS RAT-HOLE!
"LOGISTICAL SUPPORT" MY EYE!
"VERBA VOLANT," AS THEY SAY!
I OUGHT TO HAVE DONE THE SAME AS MY COUSIN LIMITEDNUMBUS WHO'S WORKING ON THE CENSUS IN GAUL. AT LEAST HE'S IN A CUSHY JOB!
31A
SURE ENOUGH, JUST THEN, VERY FAR AWAY...
NO YOU WILL NOT DRAW UP A LIST! NO YOU WILL NOT DRAW UP A LIST!
BOM BOM BOM BOM
FULLIAUTOMATIX! STOP BANGING THAT ANVIL AND GO TO BED!
YES, INAUSPICIUS, BUT REMEMBER THAT GAUL ISN'T ALWAYS SIMPLE. THINK OF OUR GARRISON AT TOTORUM!
HO, HO, YES! THE VILLAGE OF MADMEN WITH THAT AGGRESSIVE DWARF AND THE FAT FOOL! WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES AGAIN?
?!
ASTERIX AND OBELIX.
BUT HE WASN'T FAT.
31B

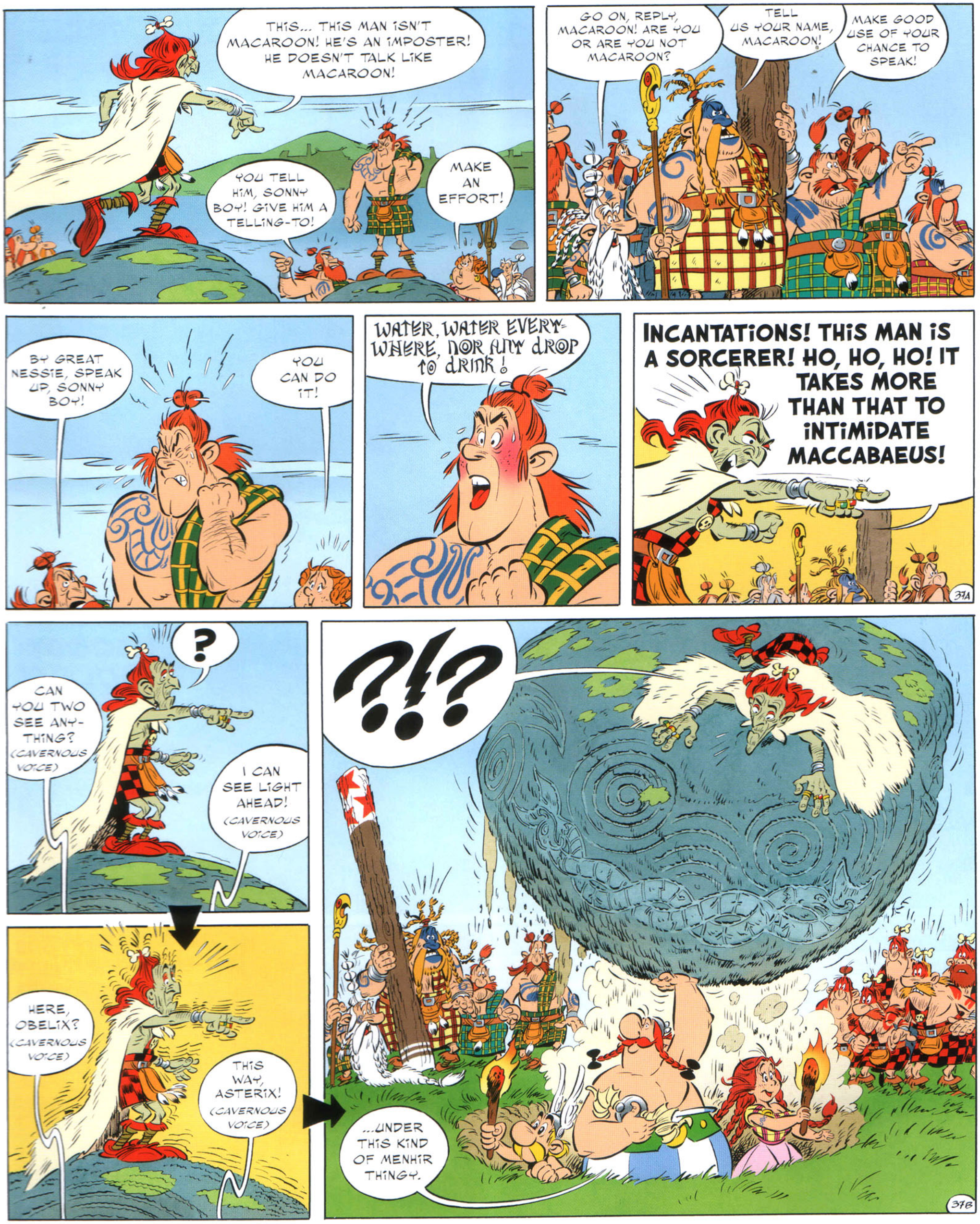

BONK! PLAF!
ROMANS HERE IN CALEDONIA? THAT'S STRANGE!
MAYBE THEY CAME ALONG THE TUNNELS.
IF IT'S YOU AGAIN, I WARN YOU, YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME!
MEANWHILE, HIGHER UP...
YOUR HOME IS REMARKABLE, O MACCABAEUS!
YES, I LIKE IT. IT'S VERY CENTRAL.
EXCUSE ME A MINUTE! WHAT'S GOING ON, YOU TWO?
32A
ER... WE'VE SEEN YOUR FUTURE QUEEN, O MACCABAEUS...
SHE DOESN'T WANT TO GO UP ABOVE GROUND.
SHE STILL SEEMS TO HATE THE IDEA OF MARRIAGE, O CHIEF!
MY SWEET SWALLOW! I LOVE IT WHEN SHE PRETENDS TO RESIST ME!
VERY WELL. LET HER GO ON THINKING. THE MAGNANIMOUS MACCABAEUS WILL ALWAYS LEAVE HIS DOOR OPEN...
CAMOMILLA! WE WERE LOOKING FOR A STUPID DOPE, AND WE THOUGHT YOU COULD HELP US...
YOU MIGHT AT LEAST BE POLITE!
FINALLY, AFTER SEVERAL WORDS OF EXPLANATION...
MACAROON IS ALIVE! AND YOU ARE THE MAGIC GAULS FORETOLD BY MACROBIOTIX! OH, WHAT LUCK! TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!
ER... LET'S TIE UP THE GUARDS FIRST TO KEEP THEM FROM RAISING THE ALARM!
32B

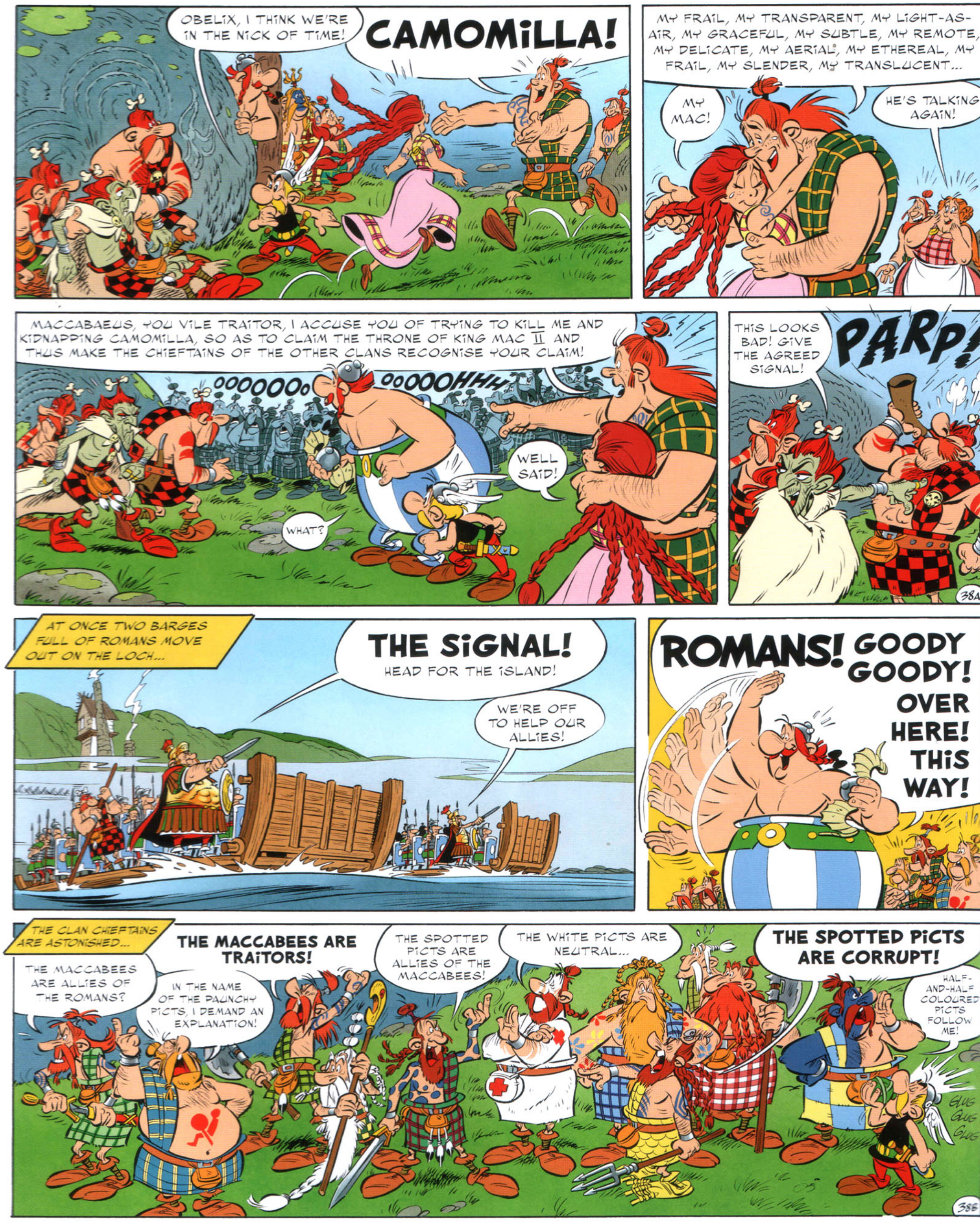

WELL, IT ALL STARTED BECAUSE WE WERE LOOKING FOR OYSTERS...
OBELIX, YOU CAN TELL YOUR STORY LATER! WE DON'T WANT TO DAWDLE!
I WENT OVER TO HIM: HE WAS LOOKING AT ME THROUGH THE ICE!
BY TOUTATIS, I COULD HAVE SWORN WE'D BEEN THIS WAY BEFORE!
THEN THE DRUID SAID, "IT'S NOT SERIOUS, HE'S GOT A TUMBLING RUMMY"...
OBELIX, WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH TO ASK YOU TO CONCENTRATE ON THE GALLERY WE'RE LOOKING FOR?
THE GALLERY? BUT WE PASSED IT JUST NOW!
33A
WHAT? AND ONLY NOW YOU TELL US!
I WAS TALKING TO THE FUTURE QUEEN, MISTER ASTERIX!
AND I ADVISE YOU TO CHANGE YOUR TONE, MISTER OBELIX!
THE FUTURE QUEEN AND I DON'T NEED YOUR ADVICE, MISTER ASTERIX! MISTER ASTERIX GIVES TOO MUCH ADVICE ANYWAY!
?
"DON'T SAIL THAT SHIP, DON'T TOSS THAT CABER, DON'T HIT THAT BARD AND GNGNGN AND..."
SHUT UP, OBELIX! THERE'S TOO MUCH OF AN ECHO HERE!
QUICK! LOOK AT THIS! A GALLERY GOING DOWN!
KOF KOF
AND THE DOWNWARD SLOPE BEGINS
GRMBLL AND WHAT'S MORE IF I WANT TO ECHO THEN I WILL ECHO...
OBELIX, YOU'RE GETTING ON MY NERVES!
IT MUST COME OUT ON THE BANK OF THE LOCH!
33B

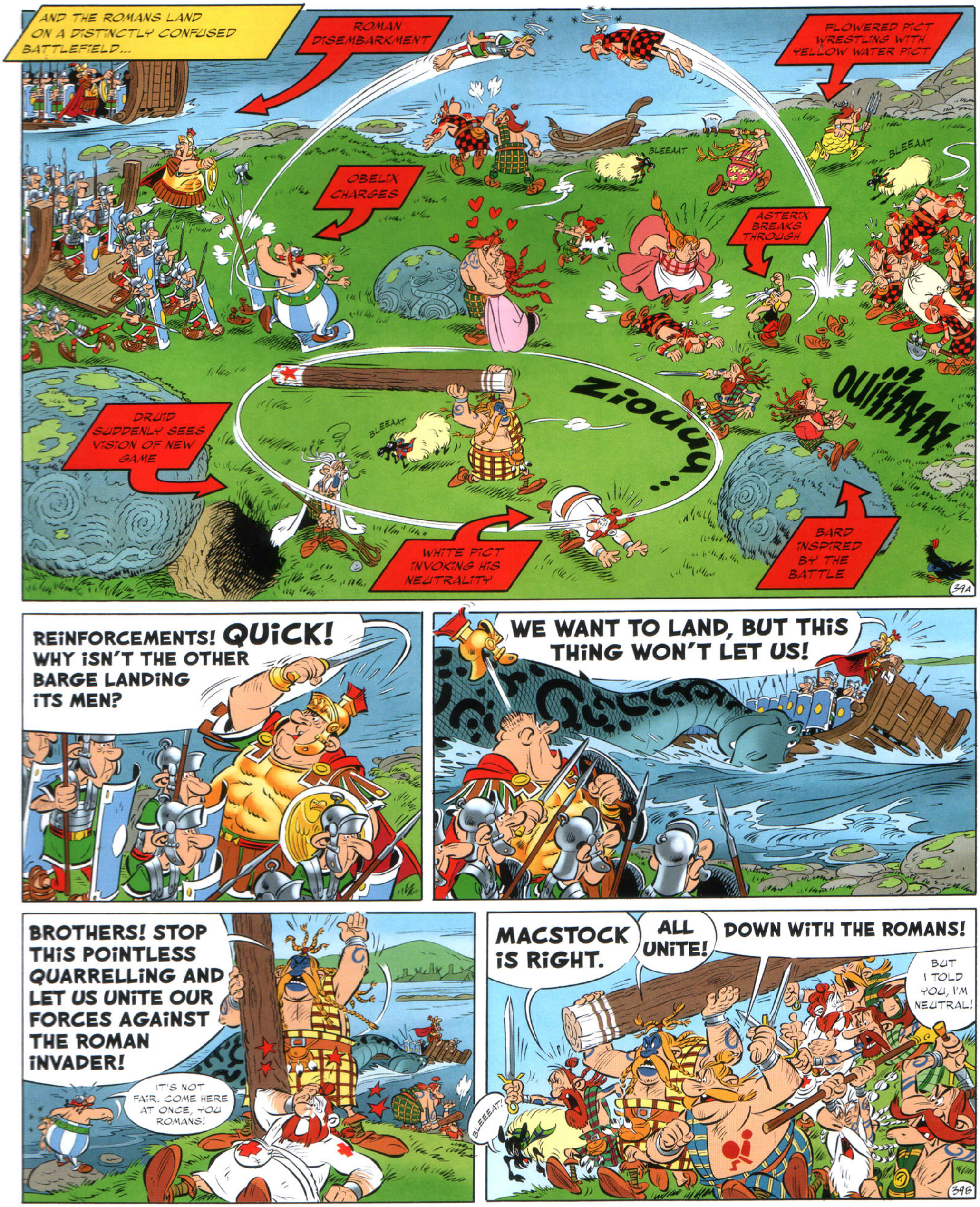

MEANWHILE...
ARE OUR PLANS CLEAR, CENTURION PRETENTIUS?
FERPECTLY CLEAR, O MACVICAR OUR PRIEST! LET ME GO OVER IT ALL AGAIN...
WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR PROCLAMATION, IF SOME OF THE CHIEFTAINS PRESENT DON'T GO ALONG WITH US, OUR LEGIONARIES WILL INTERVENE AND WE'LL TAKE HOSTAGES!
RAPIDITY, EFFICIENCY, SOBRIETY, BY JUPITER!
PERFECT! LET'S DRINK TO THIS NEW COUNTRY THAT WE SHALL BUILD TOGETHER!
TO THE – HIC – NEW CALEDONIA! AH HA!
BUT NEVER FEAR, ROMANS! MACCABAEUS REX WILL NOT BE UNGRATEFUL!
AFTER SWEEPING THROUGH BRITAIN, HE WILL INVITE CAESAR TO MARCH ON GAUL WITH HIM!
PFROU!
34A
ER... EXCUSE ME, BUT GAUL ALREADY BELONGS TO US ROMANS...
OR SO TO SPEAK.
OF COURSE, OF COURSE. WE'LL SETTLE ALL THESE LITTLE DETAILS LATER. MORE MALTED WATER?
THANKS – HIC – JUST A DROP!
WE'RE ON DUTY!
DO YOU SEE SOMETHING?
OCH. AYE!
HOWEVER HARD I CONCENTRATE, I CAN'T SEE A THING!
OUR POOR COUSINS! SUPPOSE THEY NEVER COME BACK?
34B


DAY IS DAWNING... THE ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOCH IS SEETHING WITH EXCITEMENT BEFORE THE CEREMONY TO ACCLAIM THE NEW KING...
OUIIIINN
BOM BOM BOM
BLEEAAT BLEEAAT
PEEWIT
...CAUSING CONFUSION AMONG SOME OF THE LOCAL INHABITANTS...
ALL THE LEADING CLAN CHIEFTAINS HAVE COME. PICTS OF THE PLAINS, WOODLAND PICTS, PAUNCHY PICTS, SPOTTED PICTS, LAUGHING PICTS, YELLOW WATER PICTS... YOU COULD CALL THEM A PICKED BUNCH.
OUIIIIINNEEE
EVEN A GREAT WHITE PICT HAS COME.
WHITE IS SO ELEGANT!
YES, BUT IT SHOWS THE DIRT.
35A
MACCABAEUS AND HIS SUPPORTERS ADVANCE...
...MINGLING WITH THE CROWD AND BUYING SHOTS OF MALTED WATER TO WIN VOTES...
DRINK TO MACCABAEUS.
MACCABAEUS IS GOOD FOR YOU!
SEE THE CONQUERING HERO COMES!
THE VOTING PROCEDURE FOR A CANDIDATE TO ASCEND THE THRONE IS RATHER COMPLICATED. FIRST COME THE INDEPENDENTS...
YOU KNOW ME, FRIENDS. I DON'T BELONG TO ANY CLAN...
BUT THE ASSEMBLY OF CHIEFTAINS HAS A RIGHT OF VETO.
AND EVEN THE PICT NATS FIND IT HEAVY GOING.
BONK!
35B

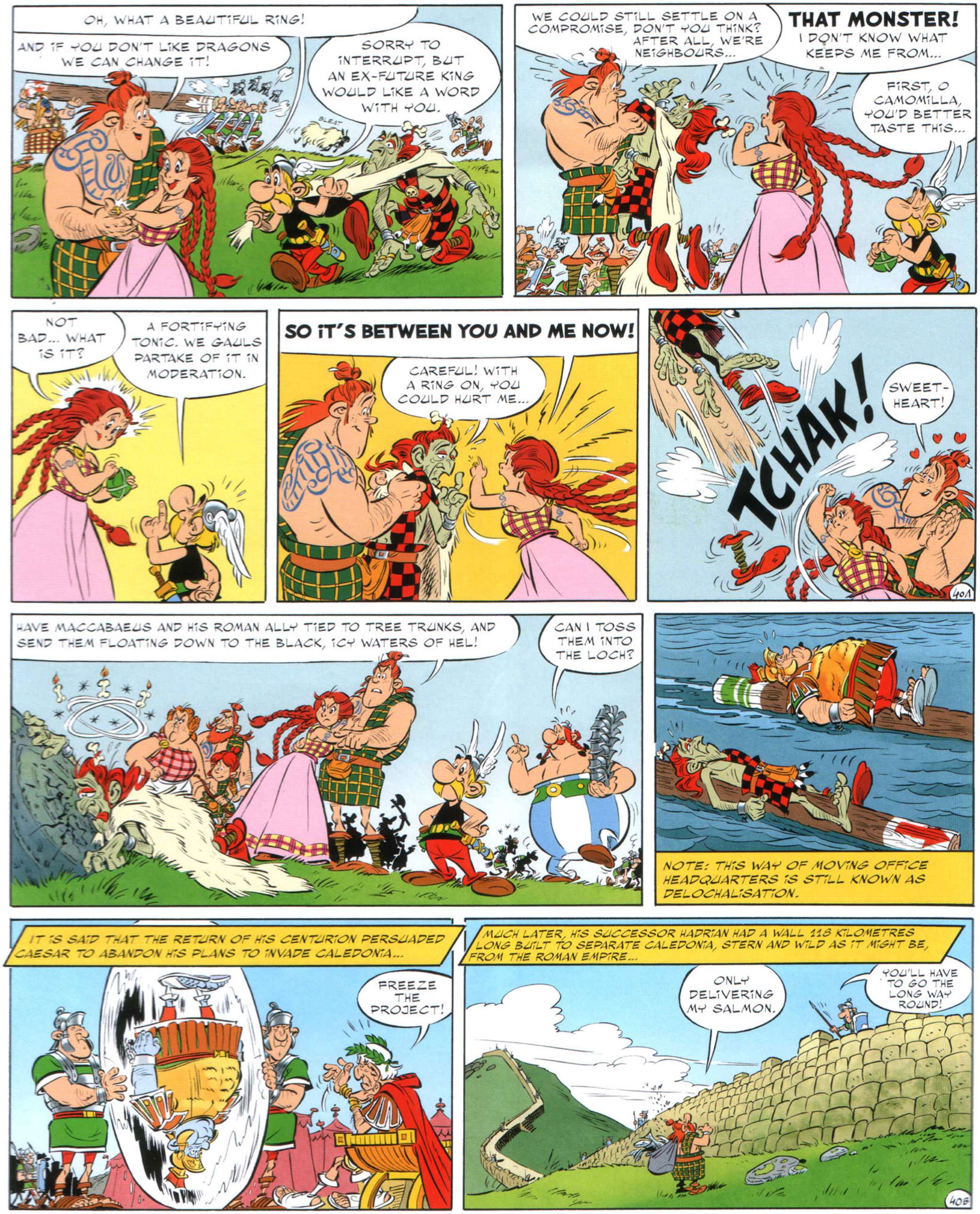

AND YOU KNOW ME TOO, FRIENDS! I DON'T JUST TALK OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD. WITH ME AS YOUR LEADER, WE'LL HAVE A HEAD START!
BONK!
THESE CANDIDATES ARE A REAL HEADACHE!
LET'S HOPE THE NEXT IS BETTER.
TOUCH WOOD!
AND NOW MACCABAEUS SPEAKS UP...
YOU REALLY DO KNOW ME, PICTS! YOU KNOW HOW CLOSE I WAS TO OUR DEAR DEPARTED KING, THE GOOD MAC II!
AS PROOF OF HIS TRUST IN ME, DID HE NOT ASK ME TO TAKE CARE OF HIS ADOPTED DAUGHTER, THE ETHEREAL CAMOMILLA?
THAT... HIP-HOP! THAT'S NOT TRUE!
36A
MACAROON?!
MACAROON IS ALIVE?
BUT HE DROWNED... WAS HE FISHED OUT?
HERE'S A FISHY TURN OF EVENTS!
MACAROON? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WHY, I MYSELF... ER, HOW CAN I PUT IT?
PU... PUSHED ME INTO THE LOCH, YOU MEAN?
WELL SAID, SONNY BOY! CARRY ON!


THIS... THIS MAN ISN'T MACAROON! HE'S AN IMPOSTER! HE DOESN'T TALK LIKE MACAROON!
YOU TELL HIM, SONNY BOY! GIVE HIM A TELLING-TO!
MAKE AN EFFORT!
GO ON, REPLY, MACAROON! ARE YOU OR ARE YOU NOT MACAROON?
TELL US YOUR NAME, MACAROON!
MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR CHANCE TO SPEAK!
BY GREAT NESSIE, SPEAK UP, SONNY BOY!
YOU CAN DO IT!
WATER, WATER EVERY-WHERE, NOR ANY DROP TO DRINK!
INCANTATIONS! THIS MAN IS A SORCERER! HO, HO, HO! IT TAKES MORE THAN THAT TO INTIMIDATE MACCABAEUS!
37A
?
CAN YOU TWO SEE ANY-THING? (CAVERNOUS VOICE)
I CAN SEE LIGHT AHEAD! (CAVERNOUS VOICE)
HERE, OBELIX? (CAVERNOUS VOICE)
THIS WAY, ASTERIX! (CAVERNOUS VOICE)
?!?
...UNDER THIS KIND OF MENHIR THINGY.
37B


OBELIX, I THINK WE'RE IN THE NICK OF TIME!
CAMOMILLA!
MY FRAIL, MY TRANSPARENT, MY LIGHT-AS-AIR, MY GRACEFUL, MY SUBTLE, MY REMOTE, MY DELICATE, MY AERIAL, MY ETHEREAL, MY FRAIL, MY SLENDER, MY TRANSLUCENT...
MY MAC!
HE'S TALKING AGAIN!
MACCABAEUS, YOU VILE TRAITOR, I ACCUSE YOU OF TRYING TO KILL ME AND KIDNAPPING CAMOMILLA, SO AS TO CLAIM THE THRONE OF KING MAC II AND THUS MAKE THE CHIEFTAINS OF THE OTHER CLANS RECOGNISE YOUR CLAIM!
OOOOOOO
OOOOOHHH
WELL SAID!
WHAT?
THIS LOOKS BAD! GIVE THE AGREED SIGNAL!
PARP!
38A
AT ONCE TWO BARGES FULL OF ROMANS MOVE OUT ON THE LOCH...
THE SIGNAL! HEAD FOR THE ISLAND!
WE'RE OFF TO HELP OUR ALLIES!
ROMANS! GOODY GOODY! OVER HERE! THIS WAY!
THE CLAN CHIEFTAINS ARE ASTONISHED...
THE MACCABEES ARE ALLIES OF THE ROMANS?
IN THE NAME OF THE PAUNCHY PICTS, I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION!
THE MACCABEES ARE TRAITORS!
THE SPOTTED PICTS ARE ALLIES OF THE MACCABEES!
THE WHITE PICTS ARE NEUTRAL...
THE SPOTTED PICTS ARE CORRUPT!
HALF-AND-HALF COLOURED PICTS FOLLOW ME!
GLUG GLUG GLUG
38B

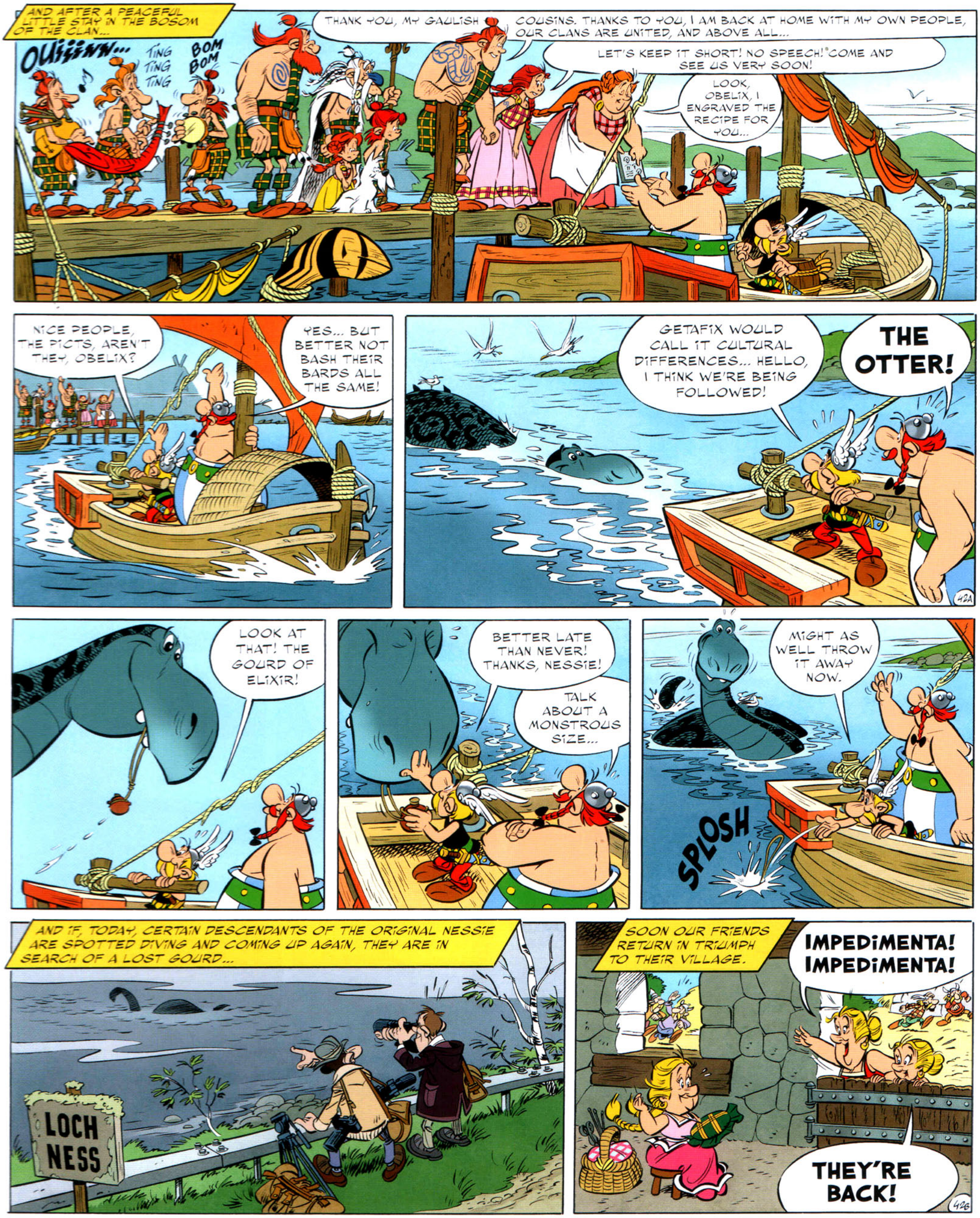


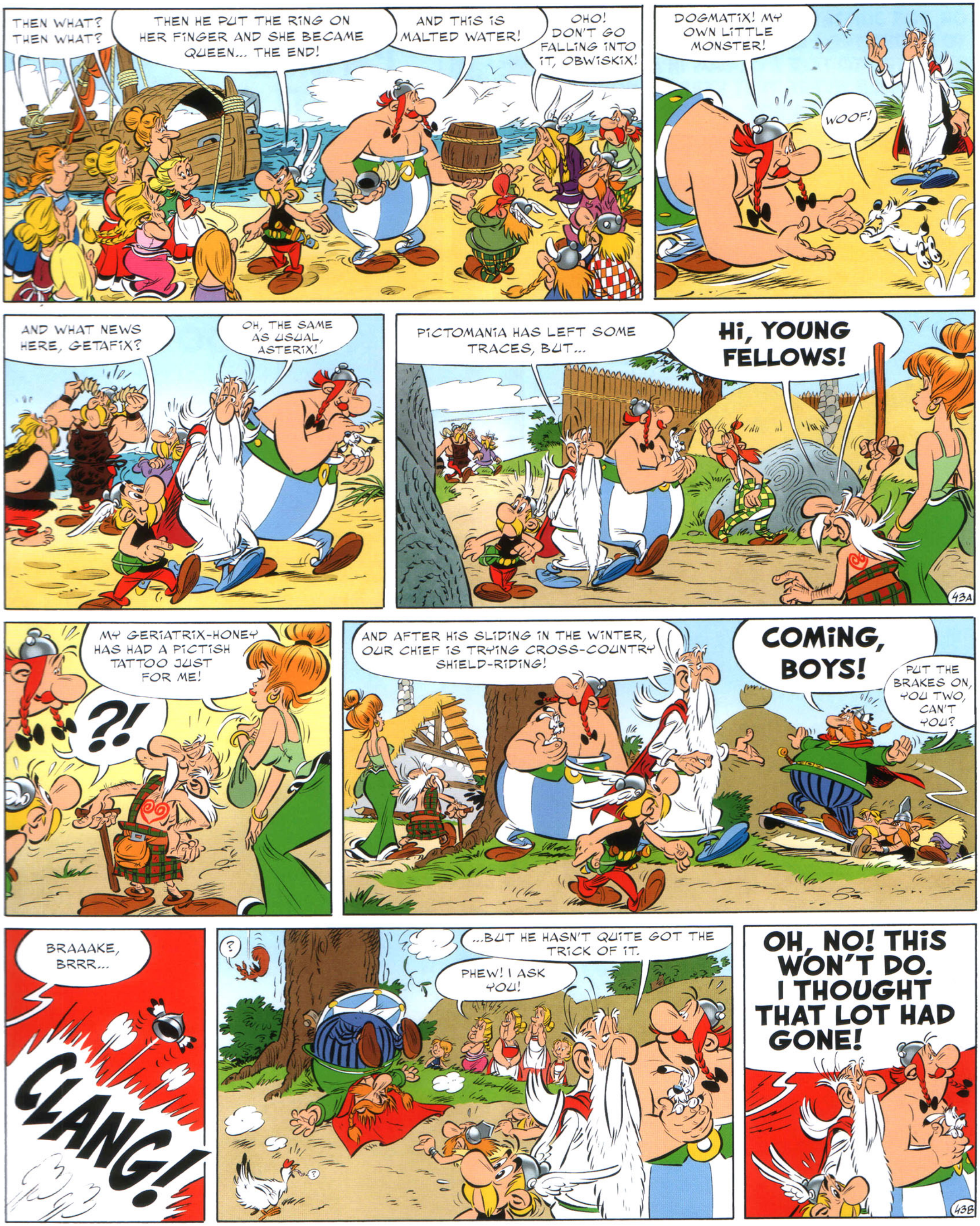
AND THE ROMANS LAND ON A DISTINCTLY CONFUSED BATTLEFIELD...
ROMAN DISEMBARKMENT
FLOWERED PICT WRESTLING WITH YELLOW WATER PICT
BLEEAAT
BLEEAAT
OBELIX CHARGES
ASTERIX BREAKS THROUGH
DRUID SUDDENLY SEES VISION OF NEW GAME
BLEEAAT
WHITE PICT INVOKING HIS NEUTRALITY
BARD INSPIRED BY THE BATTLE
REINFORCEMENTS! QUICK! WHY ISN'T THE OTHER BARGE LANDING ITS MEN?
WE WANT TO LAND, BUT THIS THING WON'T LET US!
BROTHERS! STOP THIS POINTLESS QUARRELLING AND LET US UNITE OUR FORCES AGAINST THE ROMAN INVADER!
IT'S NOT FAIR. COME HERE AT ONCE, YOU ROMANS!
MACSTOCK IS RIGHT.
ALL UNITE!
DOWN WITH THE ROMANS!
BUT I TOLD YOU, I'M NEUTRAL!
BLEEEAT!


OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL RING!
AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE DRAGONS WE CAN CHANGE IT!
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT AN EX-FUTURE KING WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU.
BLEAT
WE COULD STILL SETTLE ON A COMPROMISE, DON'T YOU THINK? AFTER ALL, WE'RE NEIGHBOURS...
THAT MONSTER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT KEEPS ME FROM...
FIRST, O CAMOMILLA, YOU'D BETTER TASTE THIS...
NOT BAD... WHAT IS IT?
A FORTIFYING TONIC. WE GAULS PARTAKE OF IT IN MODERATION.
SO IT'S BETWEEN YOU AND ME NOW!
CAREFUL! WITH A RING ON, YOU COULD HURT ME...
TCHAK!
SWEET-HEART!
HAVE MACCABAEUS AND HIS ROMAN ALLY TIED TO TREE TRUNKS, AND SEND THEM FLOATING DOWN TO THE BLACK, ICY WATERS OF HEL!
CAN I TOSS THEM INTO THE LOCH?
NOTE: THIS WAY OF MOVING OFFICE HEADQUARTERS IS STILL KNOWN AS DELOCHALISATION.
IT IS SAID THAT THE RETURN OF HIS CENTURION PERSUADED CAESAR TO ABANDON HIS PLANS TO INVADE CALEDONIA...
FREEZE THE PROJECT!
MUCH LATER, HIS SUCCESSOR HADRIAN HAD A WALL 118 KILOMETRES LONG BUILT TO SEPARATE CALEDONIA, STERN AND WILD AS IT MIGHT BE, FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE...
ONLY DELIVERING MY SALMON.
YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THE LONG WAY ROUND!



WE'RE ALL FOR MACAROON!
LONG LIVE MACAROON!
LONG LIVE THE NEW KING!
LONG LIVE CAMOMILLA!
HEY, YOU'VE LOST YOUR HELMET.
?
HOW CAN MACAROON BECOME KING SO QUICKLY?
EASY! BY ACCLAMATION IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CHIEFTAINS!
I FORETOLD IT!
SSSH! HE'S GOING TO SPEAK.
FROM NOW ON, FRIENDS, WE WILL BE A SINGLE CLAN! LET'S ALL SING THE LOVE SONG OF THE GROUSE TOGETHER... AND NO GROUSING!
COME FILL UP MY CUP
COME FILL UP MY CAN
COME SADDLE YOUR CATTLE
AND CALL UP YOUR MEN!
KROKAK
IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE RARITY OVER SEVERAL CENTURIES OF THE CALEDONIAN COCKEREL, A PARTICULARLY SELF-CONSCIOUS FOWL, IS DUE TO THE EXCESSIVE USE OF THIS CRY...
AS FOR THE RULES FOR PASSING ON ROYAL POWER, I SUGGEST SIMPLIFYING THEM!
DOESN'T HE SPEAK WELL?
I KNOW! WHY SHOULDN'T IT PASS TO THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE KING AND QUEEN?
DAUGHTER? WHY THE DAUGHTER?
AND WHY NOT THE DAUGHTER, MAY I ASK?
I... ER... I DON'T KNOW... HELP HELP! I...
I'D CHOOSE THE FIRST NEPHEW...
WHY NOT PROPORTIONAL VOTING?
SUPPOSE WE CHOOSE THE SUCCESSOR BY COLOUR?
OR HAVE A DEMOCRACY LIKE THE GREEKS?
THE WHO?
ER... WERE THERE ANY SALMON PARCELS LEFT?


AND AFTER A PEACEFUL LITTLE STAY IN THE BOSOM OF THE CLAN...
OUiiiiNN...
TING TING TING
BOM BOM
THANK YOU, MY GAULISH COUSINS. THANKS TO YOU, I AM BACK AT HOME WITH MY OWN PEOPLE, OUR CLANS ARE UNITED, AND ABOVE ALL...
LET'S KEEP IT SHORT! NO SPEECH! COME AND SEE US VERY SOON!
LOOK, OBELIX, I ENGRAVED THE RECIPE FOR YOU...
NICE PEOPLE, THE PICTS, AREN'T THEY, OBELIX?
YES... BUT BETTER NOT BASH THEIR BARDS ALL THE SAME!
GETAFIX WOULD CALL IT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES... HELLO, I THINK WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED!
THE OTTER!
LOOK AT THAT! THE GOURD OF ELIXIR!
BETTER LATE THAN NEVER! THANKS, NESSIE!
TALK ABOUT A MONSTROUS SIZE...
MIGHT AS WELL THROW IT AWAY NOW.
SPLOSH
AND IF, TODAY, CERTAIN DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL NESSIE ARE SPOTTED DIVING AND COMING UP AGAIN, THEY ARE IN SEARCH OF A LOST GOURD...
LOCH NESS
SOON OUR FRIENDS RETURN IN TRIUMPH TO THEIR VILLAGE.
IMPEDIMENTA! IMPEDIMENTA!
THEY'RE BACK!


THEN WHAT? THEN WHAT?
THEN HE PUT THE RING ON HER FINGER AND SHE BECAME QUEEN... THE END!
AND THIS IS MALTED WATER!
OHO! DON'T GO FALLING INTO IT, OBWISKIX!
DOGMATIX! MY OWN LITTLE MONSTER!
WOOF!
AND WHAT NEWS HERE, GETAFIX?
OH, THE SAME AS USUAL, ASTERIX!
PICTOMANIA HAS LEFT SOME TRACES, BUT...
HI, YOUNG FELLOWS!
43A
MY GERIATRIX-HONEY HAS HAD A PICTISH TATTOO JUST FOR ME!
?!
AND AFTER HIS SLIDING IN THE WINTER, OUR CHIEF IS TRYING CROSS-COUNTRY SHIELD-RIDING!
COMING, BOYS!
PUT THE BRAKES ON, YOU TWO, CAN'T YOU?
BRAAAKE, BRRR...
CLANG!
?
...BUT HE HASN'T QUITE GOT THE TRICK OF IT.
PHEW! I ASK YOU!
OH, NO! THIS WON'T DO. I THOUGHT THAT LOT HAD GONE!
43B


OH, FOR JUPITER'S SAKE! AND NOW WE'LL HAVE TO COUNT THEM ALL AGAIN! HOW IS ANYONE EXPECTED TO TAKE A CENSUS IN A VILLAGE OF MADMEN WHERE THEY KEEP ON MOVING AND DON'T CARE A BIT?
OH YES, I WAS FORGETTING.
PLAF!
AND I DON'T COUNT FOR ANYTHING!
I'M SICK OF IT!
WE MUST DO SOMETHING, OBELIX!
WHY NOT SEND HIM TO COUNT THE PICTS?
WE'LL GET A TREE TRUNK, PUT HIM ON IT AND...
NO, YOU KNOW DOGMATIX WOULD HATE THAT!
HOUUUU ...
MIGHT AS WELL FINISH IT! REMEMBER, THERE'S A VERY SIMPLE WAY OF COUNTING GAULS!
THERE IS?
OOH, YES! I KNOW WHAT IT IS!
44A
... AND THIS VERY SIMPLE WAY OF COUNTING ALL THE GAULS, NOW REUNITED, AS OUR CLEVER READERS WILL HAVE GUESSED, IS AT THE GREAT FINAL BANQUET, BY TOUTATIS!
... XXII XXIII XXIV ...
NO, NO, MUCH BIGGER THAN AN OTTER.
AND THEY ALSO RESPECT THEIR BARDS.
THEY DO?
NOT BAD, HIC! BUT NOT AS GOOD AS BARLEY BEER!
MUNCH MUNCH
THE END
FERRI + CONRAD



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